Week ending July 9 1955 Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

Begins this week

AN EPIC OF COURAGE—AND A MOVING LOVE STORY

The Searchers

by Alan Le May

Of course it's cheap to run – it's electric!

Easy terms — that's how we got our electric refrigerator. **You could afford one, too!**

YOU MAY BE hesitating about getting an electric refrigerator because you believe it will cost too much to run. But an *electric* fridge can cost as little as a penny a day! Think of all the economies as well as all the benefits you will enjoy: you save journeys to the shops; you can get in a good store of food when prices are low, and put it in the fridge to keep. And once it's in you can be sure that everything stays fresh—there's no waste.

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Call in at your Electricity Service Centre **... where you can see a wonderful variety of modern electric refrigerators, get helpful advice and hear all about very attractive easy terms.**

Issued by the Electrical Development Association

EDITORIAL

The cost of salads

CONSIDER the salad. The ordinary green salad, with its crisp lettuce, cool circles of cucumber, fleshy beetroot, succulent segments of firm tomato, radish knobs and leggy little spring onions. Delicious! But what does it cost?

"Too much," complains every housewife at this time of year, peering into her purse.

"Too little," grumbles every market gardener, ploughing back the crop it was not worth while gathering.

This problem of the cost of salads—and of other home-grown vegetables at other times of the year—is the hardest of all problems on the nation's dining-table.

ON the one hand is the horticultural industry, composed of about 70,000 growers and comprising a total labour force of about 150,000. It is a big industry, with £80 million sunk into glasshouses alone, and with an annual turnover of £120 million. Yet the individual grower finds it hard to make a good living.

MRS. RUBY ORD
She wants honest competition

On the other hand are the 12 million housewives, continually shocked at what they have to pay for fresh vegetables.

A noted spokesman for them is Mrs. Ruby Ord, chairman of the Hampstead Housewives Association, who declares: "The cost of distribution is far too high. What happens to horticultural produce after it reaches the wholesale market should be thoroughly investigated. There should be more local and area markets. And housewives wonder why there are so many greengrocers' shops close together, in all of which prices are roughly the same. I do not believe there is free, honest competition for the consumers' benefit."

The market gardeners, for their part, are now pressing the government for help. They have no minimum price guarantees such as farmers enjoy.

THERE are great and natural difficulties. A glut often means that prices fall too low to pay for harvesting, and there is always a weather gamble.

But, in spite of all difficulties, this problem has got to be solved, in the interests alike of a healthy vegetable industry and a healthy dinner-table at home.

Growers have a good case in asking for parity with farmers. There should be more national marketing schemes such as those now working for tomatoes and cucumbers. The National Farmers' Union must press ahead with its work of encouraging growers to form co-operatives.

Above all, the government should grant the housewives' demand for a thorough investigation, with full publicity, into the clumsy and out-of-date distribution of vegetables.

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LUCOZADE
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stands good for summer too!

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JULY 9 1955 VOL. 98 NO. 2558 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

A different law for students?

IN a university town recently, students scrawled slogans on public buildings, and climbed church spires. Society smiled indulgently—and looked the other way.

University authorities indirectly encourage what is politely called "high spirits"; in Oxford I found the college buildings bristling with barbed wire, spikes and broken glass—enough of it to challenge the initiative of any agile student.

Irreverent students seem to "decorate" public monuments with apparent impunity. Yet I read of a Teddy boy who was called a hooligan and put on probation for smearing the statue of a city father with paint.—E. P., Grantham.

Points West

IN "A Roof For San Patricio" (JOHN BULL, June 11), I was surprised to see double-deck buses depicted in

Looking down Fifth Avenue

a New York street. Are there any double-deckers in the U.S.A.? — P. ROGERS, Southport.

. . . The "snorter" collected by Captain Harding (JOHN BULL, June 11) is said to include a Brazilian dollar bill. This should be a cruzeiro note, for Brazil does not issue dollars.—S. C. GREENLEES, London, N.W.7.

Fifth Avenue, in New York, has a double-deck bus service—the only one in the city.

One cruzeiro is worth seventy-five dollars.

Wily Sow

ANIMALS are quick to learn to avoid electric fences ("Free Speech," June 11). A farmer I know fenced an old sow in a field, using a single strand of wire. A few days later the sow appeared in the next field, having dug a trench below the wire. The next year the farmer put the sow in the original field, without any wire. Promptly she dug a trench—under the non-existent fence.—J. CAMP, Amersham, Bucks.

Gum-Coloured

SURELY it is wrong to say ("This Week's Cover," June 11) that khaki was first used in India. I thought it was worn by the Boers, for I remember Mark Twain describing a young Boer's uniform as "a suit of the most ugly hue—a chewed chewing-gum colour." This is an apt description.—J. GREENE, Crumlin, Co. Antrim.

"Khaki was an expedient of the early Afghan wars," says the War Office. "But its advantages in India seem to have been forgotten, and British troops wore scarlet in South Africa until, later in the campaign, khaki was adopted."

Back To ABC

IT is wrong for reader Wilmott to blame modern teaching ("Free Speech," June 11) because his son cannot read well. My daughter, who has been at school for eighteen months, is reading "here is an aeroplane." But another child of the same age, taught by the "old-fashioned" method, is still at the "cat sat on the mat" stage. Most

children at modern-method schools count the minutes to school time.—MRS. I. BARBER, Romford, Essex.

"The so-called modern 'look-and-say' method of learning to read by the shapes of whole words is in fact thirty years old," says Mr. Hunter Diack, an expert at the Nottingham Institute of Education. "We have experimented on the perceptive ability of young children, and have found that the deliberate use of long distinctive words like 'aeroplane,' in otherwise simple sentences, often confuses a child later on. You cannot throw away the alphabet."

Love Line

IN Germany I saw a clothes line stretched between the chimneys of a house, and filled with baby's napkins, bootees, vests and with a model of a stork.

In rural districts, the night before a wedding, the neighbours put these articles on a bride's house to express their wishes for happiness, and many children.—E. J. F., Poole, Dorset.

The custom is followed in parts of Westphalia. The bride, for her part, should feed the local cats—reputedly the favourite animals of Freya, the Nordic goddess of love—and be prepared for wedding festivities to last until after midnight. She will probably be given a "wedding cap," and the bridegroom a slipper.

Boredom Banished

I AM one motorist who intends never to take down the "Free Lifts" sign I put up during the railway strike. Early in the strike I met some very

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

BRITAIN TAMES THE ATOM FOR PEACE

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

British scientists are racing ahead in their drive for cheap goods, clean cities and longer lives

My Darling Drudge

HER HUSBAND didn't know the drudgery of rubbing and scrubbing that old kitchen table, the trying-in-vain to keep its cracked, gnarled surface clean and hygienic. But one day...

SHE TOOK HIM ALONG to the ironmonger's. They bought a gay 'FORMICA' panel to fit their table. Little did they realise the extra leisure they were also buying.

IT WAS SO EASY TO FIX! In an hour or so the job was done, the table transformed —its clean-at-a-wipe 'FORMICA' top glowing with friendly colour.

NO TROUBLE AT ALL to clean up when all your working surfaces are 'FORMICA' Laminated Plastic. Swish a damp cloth over this non-porous surface and every trace of grease and dirt is gone.

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Stainproof, heat-resistant up to 266° F, non-porous, utterly hygienic, 'FORMICA' Laminated Plastic gives you extra leisure and freedom for a lifetime. It brings sunny colour to your home on the dullest day! Tell your husband about 'FORMICA' surfaces and he'll understand how very much it means to his busy wife. And when you buy 'FORMICA' material on kitchen units, other furniture, or in do-it-yourself panels, ask for it by name—pronounced 'FORMICA' as in 'for MY kitchen'

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REMOVE

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Holidays are here again! Have you packed — and remembered your Brylcreem? It's all your hair needs for countering the drying effect of sun and salt-water — for restoring lustre after a dip in the sea. And a good brisk massage with Brylcreem is just the thing to check dandruff. Yes, remember your Brylcreem— it's in the bag for good grooming, especially the handy half-crown tube. Also tubs 1/8, 2/6 and 4/6.

BRYLCREEM

for holiday grooming

royds 230

ARE YOU GROWING NERVY AND DEPRESSED?

If you're depressed, irritable, nervous and jumpy, it means your body needs more Vitamin B, the nerve-builder, on which your whole nervous system depends. If your food contains too little Vitamin B, your nerves will go to pieces. Increase the supply, and you will soon feel restored and re-invigorated. You won't worry so much, won't be so easily irritated or depressed.

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The World's Best Plastic Mac!

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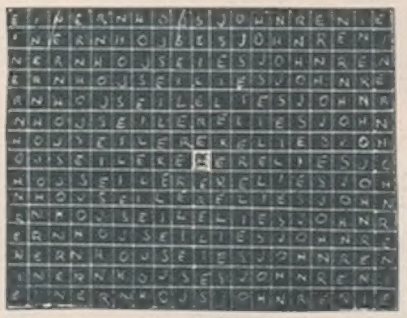
FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

interesting people, including a woman of eighty-two who was hitch-hiking four hundred miles to a grandchild's wedding, a man travelling south to "a job," which seemed to be something in the safe-cracking line, a couple eloping and a fellow miles from nowhere clutching a big bass fiddle. Their company enlivened many weary miles of travel. —F. W., Carnoustie, Angus.

Anagram Epitaph

THIS unique gravestone, nineteen squares across and fifteen down, is in St. Mary's churchyard at Monmouth. Beginning at "H," in the centre, the letters read, in any direction except



diagonally, "here lies John Renie." It was carved by Renie himself, before he died in 1852.—M. Shearwood, Watford.

"Little is known about Renie," says Canon E. P. Knight, of St. Mary's, Monmouth, "but the remarkable anagram was composed by him."

Cheerful Johnny

JOHNNY WARDLE'S capacity for the unexpected (John Bull, June 11) was illustrated when the English Test team returned from their Australian tour. Each member of the team passed the newsreel cameras looking straight ahead—until Wardle came along. He turned and winked broadly at the cameraman. — J. G. McGlennan, Glasgow, E.1.

Good Sports

MR. MORNING missed the point of sportsmanship in his attack on British athletes ("Free Speech," June 11). Surely it is not a crime to complain when the other fellow openly breaks the rules or alters them to suit himself. I for one am proud when our players stand up and condemn the "win at all costs" methods. — C. Falden, Anfield, Liverpool, 4.

. . . It was not just an excuse to say that a smaller ring, butting and fouling beat Don Cockell. The opinions of the American sports writers were enough for me.—A. Givens, Shankill Road, Belfast.

Yardarm

THE only connection between the metre, electricity and light ("Free Speech," June 4) is that the metre is regarded as a standard unit of length. A yard is the length of an arm outstretched, and the distance of one step; a mile is two thousand paces. A foot can be divided into inches by 2, 3, 4 and 6, but the only factors in the decimal system are 2 and 5.—R. N. Hadden, Kendal.

Few men—and probably no women —cover a yard with a normal step. A metre—thirty-nine and one third inches—could be paced equally well.

Hay-ho

YOUR story "The Ultra Violet Smell" (John Bull, June 11) reminds me of the woman in a Glasgow chemist's shop who asked for "a bottle of perfume —I can't remember the name, but I know it comes from Grasse" (pronouncing it "grass"). The assistant promptly produced a bottle of perfume called "New Mown Hay." —H. Williams, Aveley, Essex.

Apple Pirates

THE inferior Bramley apples ("Free Speech," June 4) may have resulted from faulty storage. But it is also possible that the fruit was marketed in a low grade, bought at a low price and sold as quality fruit.

We, the growers, do our best and suggest that the housewife buys wrapped apples with their name and origin printed on the wrapper.

It is very common for retailers to mix a few good bushels with low quality apples, to make extra shillings. Then the housewife blames us, and English fruit generally.

Foreign produce usually passes government inspection in the country of origin. Ours does not. — G. Pilborough, Sedlescombe, Sussex.

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

Signor Alfonso Barda

In our issue for December 19, 1953, in the fourth instalment of "Detectives In Khaki," we published a statement which imputed that Signor Alfonso Barda, who is a well-known motor dealer carrying on business in Tripoli, N. Africa, had during the last war attempted to sell a number of stolen army lorries. We now recognize that these imputations are entirely unfounded and we desire to express to Signor Barda our sincere apologies.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

HUSBANDS must often suspect that wives get more fun out of preparing for a holiday than actually taking it. They gaily wash and iron huge—though largely unwanted—piles of clothing, and then wallow in a sea of tissue paper. Finally, though, the man of the house brings the lid down on the proceedings. He ignores the illogicality of trying to cram the contents of a wardrobe into a suitcase in return for an implied compliment—being credited with enough strength to do it. But as Edwin Phillips's cover painting suggests, even flattery is no match for a husband's indignation when the airing cupboard's last crisp consignment arrives seconds too late.

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TV.53. A 14" table model with an attractively finished cabinet in walnut veneer. As well as telepic tuning this model includes Bush Auto-Control of vision and sound and flywheel synchronisation. This model has main controls conveniently placed at the front of the receiver and is completely ready now for the alternative programmes **65 GNS.** (TAX PAID)

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A magnificent new novel of the pioneers of the West

THE SEARCHERS

by ALAN LE MAY

SUPPER WAS OVER BY SUNDOWN, and Henry Edwards walked out from the house for a last look around. He carried his light shotgun, in hopes that the rest of the family would think he meant to pick up a sage hen or two—a highly unlikely prospect anywhere near the house. He had left his gun belt on its peg beside the door, but he had sneaked the heavy six-gun itself into his waistband inside his shirt.

Martha was washing dishes in the wooden sink close by, and both their daughters—Lucy, a grown-up seventeen, and Debbie, not yet eleven—were drying and putting away. He didn't want to get them all stirred up; not until he could figure out for himself what had brought on his sharpened dread of the coming night.

"Take your pistol, Henry," Martha said clearly. Her hands were busy, but her eyes were on the holster where it hung empty in plain sight, and she was laughing at him. That was the wonderful thing about Martha. At thirty-eight she looked older than she was in some ways, especially her hands. But in other ways she was a lot younger. Her sense of humour did that.

She could laugh hard at things other people thought only a little bit funny, or not funny at all; so that often Henry could see the pretty sparkle of the girl he had married twenty years back.

He grunted and went out. Their two sons were on the back gallery as he came out of the kitchen. Hunter Edwards, named after Martha's family, was nineteen, and as tall as his old man. Only his eyes moved as he turned them to the shotgun. He said dutifully, "Help you, Pa?"

"Nope."

Ben, fourteen, was whittling out a butter

He found tears on her cheeks, and she hugged him so hard he feared he would have to pull her arms away. "Quiet now," he whispered

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

paddle. "Don't you forget to sweep them shavings up," Henry said.

"I won't, Pa."

They watched their father walk off, his long, slow-looking steps quiet in his flat-heeled boots, until he circled the corrals and was out of sight.

"What's he up to?" Ben asked. "There ain't any game out there. Not short of the half mile."

Hunter hesitated. He knew the answer but, like his father, he didn't want to say anything yet.

"I don't know," he said at last. Within the kitchen he heard a match strike and knew his mother was lighting a lamp. He called softly, "Ma. Not right now."

His mother came to the door and looked at him oddly, the blown-out match smoking in her hand. He met her eyes for a moment, but looked away again without explaining.

Martha Edwards went back into the kitchen, moving thoughtfully; and no lights came on.

HUNTER saw that his father was in sight again very far away for the short time he had been gone. He was walking towards the top of a gentle hill north west of the ranch buildings. Hunter watched him steadily as long as he was in sight. Henry never did go clear to the top. Instead, he climbed just high enough to see over, then circled the contour to look all ways, so that he showed himself against the sky no more than he had to.

From just behind the crest of the little hill, he could see about a dozen miles most ways. The evening light was uncommonly clear, but the faint roll of the prairie was deceptive. A whole squadron of cavalry could probably hide itself at a thousand yards, in a place that looked as flat as a parade ground.

He looked back at his house. He had made his family fairly comfortable here, at long last, working patiently with his hands through the years when there was no money, and no market for cows, and nothing to do about it but work and wait. He could hardly believe there had been eighteen years of that kind of hanging on. But they had come out here that long ago—the same year Hunter had been born—drawn by these miles and miles of good grass, free to anyone who dared expose himself to the Kiowas and Comanches.

It hadn't looked so dangerous when they first came, in 1851, for the Texas Rangers had just pushed the Wild Tribes back out of the way. But right after that, the Rangers were virtually disbanded, on the thrifty theory that the Federal Government was about to take over the defence. The Federal troops did not come.

So the risky years slid by, while no military help appeared. Their nearest neighbours, the Pauleys, were murdered in a Comanche raid, without survivors except a little boy, Martin, less than two years old; and they heard of many, many more.

But the years of work had produced results. Now, they were as good as rich—and living in the deadliest danger that had overhung them yet. For the Kiowas and Comanches had started up again.

Nevertheless you get used to unresting vigilance, and a perpetual danger becomes part of the everyday things around you. After a long time you probably wouldn't know how to digest right any more, if it went away altogether. All that was behind his fears could not explain, exactly, the way Henry felt tonight, but he was sure he had seen, or heard, or maybe even smelled some sign so small that he couldn't remember it.

Patiently he studied the long sweep of the prairie. He was sorry now that he had let Amos go last night to help the Mathisons chase cow thieves; Amos was Henry's brother and a rock of strength. It should have been enough that he let Martin Pauley go along. Mart was the little boy they had found in the brush, after the Pauley massacre, and raised as their own. He was eighteen now.

A quarter of a mile off, a bedded-down meadow lark sprang into the air, circled uncertainly, then drifted away. Henry became motionless, except for his eyes, which moved continually, casting the plain. Five hundred yards to the right of the spot where the meadow lark had jumped, a covey of quail went up.

Henry turned and ran for the house.

MARTIN PAULEY was one of twelve riders who had gathered to trail the cow thieves. They picked up the churned trail of the stolen herd shortly after dawn, and followed it briskly, paced by the light-riding Mathison boys on their good horses.

Martin Pauley lagged back. He had a special grouch of his own because he had looked forward to talking with Laurie Mathison before they set out. Laurie was eighteen, like himself—straight and well boned, he thought, in terms he might have used to judge a filly. Lately he had caught her unwary grey eyes following him, now and then, when he was around the Mathisons'. But not this morning.

Laurie had been flying around, passing out coffee and quick-grab breakfast, with two of the Harper boys and Charlie MacCorry helping her on three sides—all of them clowning, and cutting up, and showing off, until there was no way to get near.

Martin Pauley was a quiet boy, dark as an Indian except for his light eyes; he never did feel he cut much of a figure among the blond and easy-laughing people with whom he was raised. So he had hung back, and never did get to talk to Laurie. She ran out to his stirrup, and said, "Hi," hardly looking at him as she handed him a hunk of hot meat wrapped in bread—no coffee—and was gone again. And that was the size of it.

FOR a while Martin kept trying to think of something cute he might have said. Didn't think of a thing. So he got bored with himself, and took a wide unneedful swing out on the flank. He was casting the prairie restlessly, looking for nothing in particular, when presently he found something that puzzled him and made him uneasy.

Mystified, he crossed the trail and swung wide on the other flank to take a look at the ground over there; and here he found Amos, doing the same thing.

Amos Edwards was forty, two years older than his brother Henry, a big burly figure on a strong but speedless horse. He was riding lumpily, not touching the reins, while he guided his horse with the calves of his legs and two-ounce shifts of weight.

"Uncle Amos," Martin said, "you notice something almighty fishy about this trail?"

"Like what?"

"Well, at the jump-off I counted tracks of twelve, fifteen ponies working this herd. Now I can't find no more than four, five. First I supposed the rest had pushed on ahead, and their trails got tromp out by cows——"

"Do me one thing," Amos said. "Drop this 'Uncle' foolishness."

Martin was blanked. "What should I call you?"

"Name's Amos."

"All right, Amos," said Martin. "You want I should mousey round and see what the rest of 'em think?"

"They'll tell you the same." Amos went back into his shell, fixing to bide his time.

It was noon, and they had paused to water, before Amos made his opinion known. "Aaron," he said in tones most could hear, "I'd be relieved to know if all these boys realize what we're following here. Because it ain't cow thieves. Not the species we had in mind. What we got here is a split-off from an Indian war party, running wild on a raid."

Aaron Mathison rubbed his fingers through his beard and appeared to consider; and some of the others put in a word while he did that. Old Mose Harper pointed out that none of the thieves had ridden side by side, not once on the trail, as the tracks showed plain. Indians

There was still no sign of the cattle thieves. Casting the prairie endlessly, Martin felt restless and uneasy. "Uncle Amos," he said, puzzled, "you notice something almighty fishy about this trail?"

rode single file, but white men rode abreast in order to gab all the time.

Aaron Mathison reasoned in even tones that it was cattle thieves they were after, white or Indians. And the north-easterly trend of the trail said plainly that the thieves were delivering the herd to some beef contractor for one of the Indian agencies—maybe old Fort Towson. The thieves had very little start; steady riding should force a stand before sundown tomorrow. They had only to push on, and all questions would soon be answered.

Amos was unconvinced. He said stubbornly, "This here is a pull-off from a war party. And what I want to know is, where's the main war party? If they're up ahead, that's one thing. But if they're back where our families be——"

Aaron was looking at Amos Edwards with narrowed eyes. He spoke gently, slipping into Quakerish phrasings: "Thee can turn back," he said. "If thee fears what lies ahead or what lies behind, I need thee no more."

The dilemma was resolved unexpectedly.

Brad Mathison, oldest of Aaron's boys, was ranging far ahead. They saw him disappear over the saddle of a ridge at more than two miles. Immediately he reappeared, stopped against the sky, and held his rifle over his head with both hands. It was the signal for "found." Then he dropped from sight beyond the ridge again.

THE others put the squeeze to their horses, and lifted into a hard run. They stormed over the saddle of the ridge, and were looking down into a broad basin. Some scattered bunches of red specks down there were cattle grazing loose on their own. Here was the stolen herd, unaccountably dropped and left.

Brad was looking back now, and Aaron spun his horse in close circles to call in his son. Brad turned reluctantly, and then he came trotting back.

Now Aaron spotted something fifty yards to one side, and rode to it for a closer look. He stepped down, and the others closed in around him. One of the young blood bulls lay there, spine severed by the whack of an axe. The liver had been ripped out, but no other meat taken.

When they had seen this much, most of the riders sat and looked at each other. They barely glanced at the moccasin prints, faint in the dust-film upon the baked ground.

Amos jabbed the carcass with his thumb. "Only nine, ten hours old," he said.

"I rode past five more beef kills," Brad said when he got back. "All the others are cows killed with the lance. Appears like the lance wounds drive deep forward from just under the

Some of the fires were still burning when the riders arrived. They rode in quietly

short ribs, clean through to the heart. I never saw that before."

"I have," Lije Powers said. "Them's Comanche buffalo hunters done that. Ain't no others left can handle a lance no more."

"This is a murder raid," Amos said, sending his words at Aaron like rocks. "It shapes up to scald out either your place or Henry's. Do you know that now?"

Aaron's beard was sunk on his chest. He said slowly, "I see no other likelihood."

"They drove your cattle to pull us out." Amos hammered it home. "We've give 'em free run for the last sixteen hours!"

"I question if they'll hit before moonrise. Not them Comanche," Lije said.

"Moonrise! Ain't a horse here can make it by midnight!"

Brad Mathison said through his teeth, "I'll come almighty close!" He wheeled his pony and put it into a lope.

Aaron bellowed, "Hold in that horse!" and Brad pulled down to a slamming trot. Most of the others were turning to follow Brad. Charlie MacCorry had the presence of mind to yell, "Which place first? We'll be strung out twenty mile!"

"Mathison's is this side!" Mose Harper shouted. Then to Amos, over his shoulder, "If we don't fight there, we'll come straight on!"

MARTIN PAULEY was scared sick over what they might find back home, and Laurie was in his mind too, so that the people he cared about were in two places. He was crazy to get started, but he made himself imitate Amos, who unhurriedly pulled off saddle and bridle. They fed grain again, judging carefully how much their animals would do best on. The time taken to rest and feed would get them home quicker in the end.

By the time they crossed the saddleback the rest of the riders were far spaced, according to the judgment of each as to how his horse might best be spent. Amos branched off from the way the others took. Miles were important now, and they could save a few by passing well west of Mathison's. They had more than eighty miles to go before they would know what had happened—perhaps was happening now—to the people they had left at home.

HENRY EDWARDS stood watching the black prairie through a loophole in a batten shutter. He believed now that all the trouble they could handle would be on them with the moon's first light.

The house itself was about as secure as a house could be made. The loopholed shutters were heavy enough to stop a 30-30, if not a buffalo slug, and the doors were even better. Nine or ten rifles could hold the place for ever against anything but artillery. As few as seven would have their hands full against a strong war party, but should hold.

There lay the trouble and the fear. Henry did not have seven. He had himself, and his two sons, and Martha, though Martha couldn't shoot any too well. Lucy might do for a lookout some place, but her dread of guns was so great she would be useless even to load.

And then there was Deborah. The two boys had been good shots at eight; but Debbie, though she was turned ten, seemed so little to Henry that he hadn't let her touch a weapon yet. You don't see your own children grow unless there's a new one to remind you how tiny they come.

Four rifles, then, or call it three and a half, to hold two doors and eight shuttered windows, all of which could be busted in.

Out in the work-team corral a brood mare gave a long whinny. No answer came, and after a while, when she whinnied again, Henry drew a slow breath. The mare had told him a whole basket of things he didn't want to know.

Strange ponies were out there, the mare's nose had told her. They were Indian ridden or they would have answered. The Indians were Comanches, for the Comanches were skilful at keeping their ponies quiet.

And they were coming from more than one side, because none would have approached downwind, where the mare could catch their scent, unless they were all around. A big party, then, or it would not have split up.

Lucy's voice came softly out of the dark. "Debbie?" Then more loudly, with a note of panic, "Debbie! Where are you?"

"Here I am." They heard the cover put back on the biscuit barrel at the far end of the room.

"You get back on your pallet, here! And stay put now, will you?"

Little girls in the house—that's what cut a man's strings, and made a coward of him. Henry's words were steady, though, even casual, as he made his irrevocable decision.

"Martha. Put on Debbie's coat."

A moment of silence; then Martha's single word, breathy and uncertain: "Now?"

"Right now. Moon's fixing to light us up directly."

Henry went into a front bedroom, and quietly opened a shutter. He studied the night, then went and found Martha and Debbie in the dark. The child was wearing moccasins, and hugged a piece of buffalo robe.

"We're going to play the sleep-out game," he told Debbie. "The one where you hide out with Grandma. Like you know. Very quiet, like a mouse." He was sending the little girl to her grandmother's grave.

"I know." Debbie was a shy child, but unafraid of the open prairie or the dark. She had never known her grandmother, or seen death, but she had been raised to think the grave on the hill a friendly thing. Sometimes she left picnic offerings there for Grandma.

"You keep down low," Henry said, "and you go quietly, quietly, along the ditch. Then up the hill to Grandma, and roll up in your robe, all snug and cosy."

"I remember how." They had practised this before, and even used it once, under a threat that blew over.

Henry picked her up in his arms and carried her to the window he had opened. As he kissed

her, he found tears on her cheek, and she hugged him around the neck so hard he feared he would have to pull her arms away. But she let go. "Quiet now," he murmured, and he lifted her through the window.

"Stoop low——" he whispered in her ear. And he set her on the ground outside.

* * *

Amos and Martin pulled up at the top of a long rise ten miles from home. On the south horizon a spot of fire was beginning to show. The east rim still showed nothing. The raiders had made their choice and left Mathison's alone.

They rode again, driving their beat-out horses. Amos got there ahead, and when Martin arrived he was not to be seen.

The hay and the wooden barn were still burning, sending up sparks which hung idly on the quiet air; and the house itself showed against the night in a dull red glow. On the back gallery lay a dead pony, tail to the broken door.

Martin stepped over the pony and went into the kitchen, walking as though he had never learned to walk, but had to pull each separate string. Near the door lay a body. Martin stooped, and was looking into Martha's face.

Hunter Edwards lay in a heap near the splintered hall door. Ben had fallen in a tangled knot by the far window, his gangly legs sprawled. He looked immature and undersized as he lay there, like a skinny small boy.

Next, Martin found the body of Henry Edwards, draped on its back across the broad sill of a bedroom window.

Amos came into the house. "No sign of Lucy. Or Deborah," he said. His face was wooden, but such a dreadful light shone from behind his eyes that Martin thought he had gone mad.

Martin said, "We used to practise sending Debbie up the hill to Grandma's grave——"

"I been up. They sent her up there. I found her bit of buffalo robe. But Debbie's not there. Not now."

"You suppose Lucy——"

"Can't tell yet if Lucy went up with Debbie to the grave. Not till daylight comes on."

Amos had got out a sheet and was tearing it into strips, to fix up their people as decently as he could.

He said, "I want you to walk to the Mathisons'. Get them to hook their buckboard, and bring their women on. . . . Martha should have clean clothes put on."

At once, Martin started off into the night. He was eight miles on the way to Mathisons' when the riders met him. A buckboard was bringing Mrs. Mathison and Laurie, who must no longer be left alone with a war party on the loose.

Nobody pestered him for details. Laurie made a place for him beside her on the buckboard seat, and they rode in silence, the team at a good trot.

After a mile or two Laurie whimpered, "Oh, Martie. . . . Oh, Martie. . . ." She turned toward him, rested her forehead against his shoulder, and there cried quietly for a little while. Martin sat slack and still, nothing left in him to move him either toward her or away from her. Soon she straightened up, and rode beside him in silence, not touching him any more.

Some of the fires were still burning as the riders approached the farm. They rode in quietly, nobody talking much.

The burial service was short. Daylight had shown that Lucy must have been carried bodily from the house, for they found no place where she had set foot to the ground. Debbie, the signs showed, had been picked up on to a running horse after a pitifully short chase upon the prairie. There was hope, then, that they still lived, and that one of them, or even both, might be recovered alive.

Amos must have had his foot in the stirrup before the end of the last prayer, for he swung

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Suddenly Laurie stepped up and kissed him hard and quickly. For a moment Mart was startled

Laughter haunts Fernandel

by ANTONY FERRY

Horse teeth and a vast grin have made France's best-known comedian a millionaire. But a funny face is never off duty

A RIPPLE OF LAUGHTER greeted the appearance of a short, stockily built man in the dining-room of a de luxe hotel in Nice early this season. He had a long, horse-like head topped with smooth brilliantined hair, and his dark eyes seemed to register hurt pride at the laughter he had done nothing to provoke.

The man pretended to try to compose himself, which resulted in more hilarity. He asked the waiter for *bouillabaisse*, a thick fish soup that was not on the menu. "Just tell the chef that *m'sieu* Fernandel wants his *bouillabaisse*," he said. "He will know. I caught the fish myself——"

A woman giggled behind her napkin and Fernandel at last broke into a self-conscious smile which showed a set of teeth that have been compared to thirty-two white keys of a piano.

When his soup was served, Fernandel stood up, apologized good-humouredly for what he calls his "rude physiognomy," and asked the waiter to place a screen around his table.

Wherever it is seen, the face of Fernand Joseph Désiré Contandin, better known as Fernandel, provokes laughter. Since that is his trade, he does not object. But if he detects a note of derision, he sometimes loses his temper.

Errol Flynn once saw Fernandel eating in a Rome restaurant. He began to laugh rudely, but no one else joined him. Fernandel felt justified in getting up and emptying a plate of spaghetti over Flynn's head.

"Laughter," says Fernandel, "may be a sign of a comedian's popularity, but it sometimes becomes oppressive. People never see me living my private life and they are inclined to forget that I am, after all, a human being like everyone else. But I can't blame them. It is my physiognomy, my dentures."

Wants More Serious Rôles

At fifty-two Fernandel is France's best-known actor. His guileless country-bumpkin features have become the cornerstone of the French film industry. His 112 films have made him a millionaire—"a billionaire," he says, "if you like to count it in francs."

Since the end of the war, when he was making his third comeback, this time as a serious actor, he has made at least two pictures a year, and sometimes as many as ten. He will not look at a contract under £35,000 and has the right to reject scripts that do not meet his standards.

By this means he is able to direct his own career, which is leading him to more serious films. In one forthcoming picture, for example, he plays a man who has been the victim of sleeping sickness. He has the poetic, youthful spirit of a boy of eighteen, not realizing that he has been asleep for thirty years.

Don Juan, Don Quixote and the Hunchback of Notre Dame are classic rôles he wants to play on the screen but he has so far rejected eleven scenarios. "I don't want to be accused," he says, "of Fernandelizing literature."

He records popular songs and fables, increasing his income by as much as £10,000 a year, and sometimes he makes personal appearance tours to New York and Montreal.

When in a relaxed mood, he tends to speak bluntly of his own homely features. "My physiognomy," he says, "accounts for about thirty per cent of my popularity. As for the rest, modesty forbids me to say."

He once attributed the success of the French singer Mistinguett to the fact that she wore the same size dentures as he did, and he added tactfully, "That's why we get along so well."

His Grin Welcomed Tourists

His immense grin, which seems to eat up his cheeks and envelop his chin, has been used to advertise cigarettes, toothpaste, dentures, shaving soap, and the products of almost every distillery in France. The Chamber of Deputies passed a near-unanimous vote after the Liberation to use his face on official posters welcoming tourists to France.

When he was busy becoming France's highest paid actor, Fernandel used to sign each contract at a ceremony arranged by his solicitor, who invariably accompanied him. He would accept the film company's cheque, endorse it and turn it over to his solicitor, who would then produce a title deed to some new property which Fernandel thereby acquired.

He likes to impress close friends with his business sagacity. "I made all my real estate purchases before the franc was inflated," he says. "Otherwise I would be terrified now in case people stopped laughing."

Ironically, he rarely gets time to retreat to the seven big houses he owns, two in Paris and five in his native Marseilles. He spends only three uninterrupted weeks a year with his wife, Henriette, and his three children, in their main house in Marseilles which is called Milleroses. Then his preoccupations are his family, cooking, and "fishing in the deep sea."

But most of the year he is working, and train travel takes any leisure time he might have. Because he is such a valuable asset to the French film industry, he is not allowed to fly. His life is insured for £50,000. Film companies found that the extra premiums they would have to pay each year if he travelled by air exceeded the full production costs of one of his films.

He did not realize the implications of being grounded until a few years ago, when he was offered a part in the film version of Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*.

"I had to turn it down," he says. "It would have taken 365 days to do the location shots!"

One of his British business associates says that his engagements sometimes get so out of hand because of travel delays that he will throw up his hands, shrug, and then sit down in a way that suggests collapse.

He had a heavy schedule in New York in 1948, but reluctantly agreed to one last reception which the French ambassador was holding for him between five and seven o'clock. Guests waited for two hours. Fernandel arrived with his guileless smile at five to seven.

Wasted Hunt For Publicity

In London last March he attended five cocktail parties, two luncheons, had two four-hour sessions with photographers, and was interviewed by nearly a hundred journalists, all in two days, in a publicity campaign for his latest film, *The Sheep Has Five Legs*. Most of the effort was wasted, however, because of the national newspaper strike.

Fernandel often behaves as if he regretted his popularity. Before the war he made a rare public appearance with his family for the Paris première of a film, *Josette*, in which his five-year-old daughter, also called Josette, was the co-star. Fernandel showed no regrets about his daughter becoming a young celebrity until photographers converged on their car as it stopped in front of the cinema.

When the flashbulbs went off and curious bystanders surged forward to see whether Josette bore any resemblance to her father, Fernandel

"My physiognomy accounts for thirty per cent of my popularity," says Fernandel

In *An Artist With Ladies*, Fernandel played a sheep-shearer who became a Parisian hairdresser. He wants to play classic parts such as the Hunchback of Notre Dame

Fernandel played a belligerent priest in *The Return of Don Camillo*. He has made 112 films

pushed her back into the car and had her taken home. She was not allowed to see the film and was never photographed.

He has since shielded his whole family, including a son who does resemble him, from all publicity. He even discourages associates from visiting him at Milleroses, but says, "If the occasional producer finds his way to my door, I invite him in for an aperitif."

As Fernand Contandin he was a celebrity more or less from the age of five, when his father, a café pianist, gently kicked him in front of the footlights to cure him of stage fright. "I was more at ease in my rôle as a comic than I was in my rôle as a child."

Dressed in pantaloons and a gaudy regimental tunic with peaked cap, he made his reputation in Marseilles music halls by stealing the songs and jokes of Polin, a famous vaudeville comic of the day. Little Fernand put them over so shamelessly that people began to accuse Polin of stealing them from him.

In school one day he handed the teacher seven hundred lines of penance that he had had to write for singing a doubtful song, and left the classroom never to return. He was eleven. His father had been mobilized, the first World War had begun, and young Fernand had to support his family.

Was Given Soap As Wages

He worked at fourteen different occupations, playing the music hall circuit in his spare time. After losing one job with a firm that manufactured toilet articles, he was paid off with twenty pounds of laundry soap.

He became in turn a dockhand, postman, cloth salesman and a clerk in seven banks. In each case his services were unsatisfactory.

Desperate for money one day in 1918, he thought up a scheme for importing sardines and placed an advertisement in a Portuguese newspaper falsely setting himself up as an established dealer requesting samples. A week later he received hundreds of tins of sardines which he vainly tried to hide from his mother. She made him give them away, insisting that he got them under false pretences.

He did music hall turns on Saturday nights, losing his regular jobs on Mondays after his employers had been to hear his lusty songs.

Still broke, he began courting Henriette Manse, the sister of one of his boyhood friends. "I will marry you," he told her, "when my situation arranges itself." He said he wanted to be famous first.

His future wife told him, "That's all right, but don't go too far with it."

He promised not to, and shortly after winning second prize in a singing contest he appeared at the Odeon in Marseilles as a replacement for a Parisian singer who had been found drunk in his dressing room. He quelled the riotous audience and announced himself for the first time as Fernandel.

The name was adopted as a joke because Henriette's mother always referred to him as "Henriette's Fernand," or simply "her Fernand" (*"Fernand d'elle"*).

He began playing Paris music halls. By 1930 he had such a reputation that one manager signed him up without having seen him. On opening night, the curtain was delayed fifteen minutes by people clamouring for tickets.

Fernandel was impatient until the manager exclaimed: "We've had to open up the fifth gallery. It's been closed since Coquelin first appeared here in *Cyrano de Bergerac*."

Between 1930 and 1934, Fernandel made thirty-three films in which directors exploited only the comic resources of his long face. It was Marcel Pagnol, the dramatist, who brought him to the attention of serious critics by casting him in *Angele, Regain*, and *The Well-Digger's Daughter*.

Since 1945, when he began to appear in such films as *L'Armoire Volante* and *Forbidden Fruit*, Fernandel has had no need to worry about the future. The Don Camillo pictures, in which he played a belligerent priest at loggerheads with the local Communist mayor, have made him well known to British cinemagoers.

He has, however, a rather contemptuous view of the nature of comedy. He thinks that people like his pictures because his acting gives them the chance to see themselves to advantage.

"Easy To Amuse The World"

"There is not one man," he says, "no matter how stupid or how ugly he is, who cannot see me in a cinema anywhere in the world and say to himself: 'Tonight I am happy. I have seen, and I have shown my wife, someone uglier and more stupid than myself.'"

It is not difficult to make the whole world laugh, Fernandel believes. Like Chaplin, he evokes an inferior character, an object of derisive laughter. But, unlike Chaplin, he needs little make-up to play the part. He uses his everyday face.

"Everywhere I go I am confronted with the spectacle of laughing people. I try to laugh with them, but sometimes it is difficult. When I buried my poor mother-in-law, there were thousands of people lining the streets laughing just to see the sight of me walking behind the hearse. . . ."

During such moments he thinks of his early ambitions. "If I am happy it is, nevertheless, thanks to the laughing public." THE END

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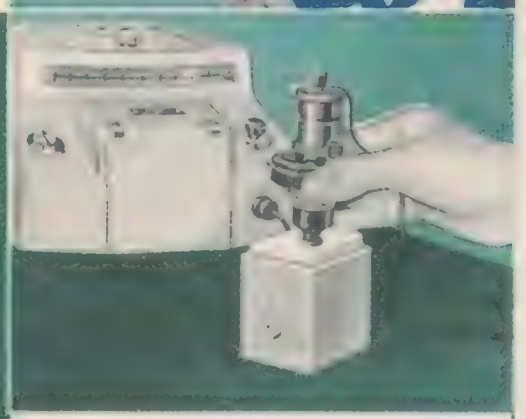

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LORD OF THE DEEP

by JOHN KRUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

He was living on his wife's money, and it hurt. He had to prove himself—if it killed him. This way, it probably would

THE YACHT DINGHY took me off from near the Galle Face in the acid dawn light. A Sinhalese in an overcoat was huddled over the sweeps. He said: "Gardener Sah'b?" He sounded sleepy. I got in and we bucked out through the surf. We didn't talk. I felt flat and apprehensive. Premonition was inside me like a cold stone. I should have called it off, I thought. Why hadn't I? The dough, of course. "He needed the dough"—it sounded like an epitaph.

I had met the Ritters yesterday for the first time, and last night I had met them again, over and over, seeing their images against the darkness of my hut, hearing their voices in the surge of the tide. I couldn't sleep for thinking of them.

The card had come to me by a barefooted Sinhalese waiter from the hotel. It was an expensive card and I had gone up there and found they were expensive people. They were sitting on the terrace sipping highballs and gazing out across the broad expanse of the Indian Ocean.

"Ah, Gardener," Duke Ritter had said, tilting his head back.

He was young, with a shiny red-tanned face and fair hair cropped close. His wife observed me without smiling. She was very striking—long and motionless, with Spanish colouring. But right away, looking from one to the other like that, I knew they had been having a row.

Ritter got straight to the point. He wanted to do some spearfishing. He was looking for a man who knew the reefs. He had heard in the hotel that I made a living spearing fish, and so he had sent for me.

I made a polite noise; let him talk on for a bit. He didn't need any encouragement.

They had the diesel yacht, he said, anchored off the Galle Face. Put in yesterday afternoon. They were headed home for Los Angeles, the hard way from Oran. Tough trip. He stuck his nice clean-cut jaw out to show me how tough it was.

He had heard about the spearfishing in Ceylon and now they were here he wanted to give it a try. Was I free for a couple of weeks? He'd pay me thirty-five dollars a day.

It was what I made in four good days' spearing. I asked him if that included equipment.

"Hell," Ritter said. "Do we look like beginners? We've spearfished every sea from here to the Med."

"We're terribly tough," his wife said. She spoke so quietly that for a second I didn't realize that she was needling him. Then I knew that I had been right about the row and it was still on and I was in it.

Ritter went very red and when he spoke again it was as though someone were standing on his

She was standing behind her husband. "We're terribly tough," she said. She said it to rile him, and I knew that their row was still on

stomach. Where were the best places to go, he wanted to know. I told him it depended on what he was after.

A queer look came into his eyes, part guilt, part anger. When he spoke, his voice was unnecessarily loud: "I want to shoot big shark!"

"Shark!" I said. "Using a buoy or a boat?"

"Neither."

"They're too heavy for a man to handle in the water; you've got no leverage. You don't play them, they play you. It's just a question of who survives."

Ritter fixed me with his hot eye. "That's exactly the way I want it," he said, and by the way he said it I knew that what he really wanted was to settle something about himself.

His wife started on him then and said a lot of things I had no business to hear. She said her whole life consisted of tearing around watching him trying to prove himself: tuna, lion shooting, mountain climbing. . . . And what was he trying to prove? That he wasn't a playboy living on his wife's money? She was glad he'd finally got this crazy idea because it was too big even for him and now he was going to get burned and maybe that would cure him.

It was too much for me. I got up to go. Duke got up and planted himself in my way. His lips were turned in and his eyes bored into mine desperately, as though that were the only way he could shut out the sound of his wife's voice.

"Where are the best places for shark?" he demanded.

"The south coast, Kuaka. But you can count me out. I don't——"

"I'll raise that to fifty dollars a day," he said. "How far is this place?"

"A couple of hundred miles."

"Good. I'll have you picked up from near the Galle Face at dawn. O.K.?"

What could I say? I remembered the new underwater gun the Australian Airways navigator had told me was selling in Sydney—and spent a tossing, sleepless night.

WE were alongside the yacht, with Ritter's muscular hand yanking me aboard. He was wearing a yachting cap and his breath smelled of rum.

"Ship the dinghy," he told the man and moved forward into the wheelhouse.

Presently what felt like triple diesels started up underfoot. I saw Mrs. Ritter then, and said good morning to her, dumped my gear on deck, and clambered on top of the saloon to help the man swing the dinghy aboard.

Then we were away. The sun came up like a bonfire behind the palms, veining the water with blood. We pulled out to sea with a snarling roar that must have awakened the whole of Colombo.

Presently Ritter hailed me from the wheelhouse and I went in and stood with him.

He was steering with his legs planted wide and his jaw up. There was something suicidal about him. An open flask leaned on the shelf behind him. He shouted to drown the engines:

"What do you think of her, hey?"

"Fine," I said. "She's fast."

"You bet your sweet life she's fast! Belonged to a smuggler. Bought her in Oran off the authorities after they'd jailed him. Drink?"

"Don't use it, thanks."

Ritter took a pull from the flask, wiped his lips. "Heard yesterday evening that you've speared a lot of sharks. You didn't tell me."

"You didn't ask me."

"What's so crazy about me wanting to, then?"

"Anyone's crazy who wants to fight sharks for the hell of it. I do it for a living and all I shoot are whitefins—hundred-pounders."

"They told me you killed big ones."

"Only when I have to," I said, remembering a few things.

"But you don't think I could, huh?"

I shrugged. "It depends on a great many things: what kind of shot you are; what kind of gun you use; what sort of shark you run into. Blackfins are pretty nervous, but blues are quick and savage. Tigers are easily the worst of the lot."

Ritter's hand tightened on the throttle so that the engine roared emphasis to his words: "I want a tiger!"

I snatched a look at him. He was serious, too serious. I suddenly wanted to say, *Now look here, you're a nice fella*. . . . It must have shown in my face because he jerked his head up angrily.

"I don't know what's the matter with you people. You're all alike. You think that because you specialize in something you're the only ones who can do it. I rowed for an Olympic team. I can box, wrestle and lift a hundred and fifty-five pounds with one hand. And when I say I want to kill shark, I want to kill shark, and no one's going to stop me! I'll pay you four hundred dollars danger money for every tiger I shoot."

"Save your money," I told him. "You'll get your tiger. I personally will see to it."

"Good," he said, calmer. "Now we've got that straight, let's have some coffee." He called for the Sinhalese seaman to take over the helm and strode ahead of me down to the saloon.

I TRIED to figure him out. Attack, attack . . . I'm as good as you are; I'll prove it. The old inferiority complex. I supposed living on his wife's money could make a man feel that way, make him want to prove himself. Well, if proof of himself was what Ritter wanted, I thought grimly, he would probably get it.

Mrs. Ritter was in the saloon thumbing

The woman clutched at him. She was trembling. "I don't want you to do it, Duke," she cried. "I'm scared. This thing's too dangerous"

through a pile of fashion magazines. She made coffee with loose-limbed movements as though she didn't much care for what she was doing, and the three of us sat around a table and drank it.

Ritter couldn't keep off his obsession for five minutes. He lifted up one of the locker seats and showed me their equipment. They had schnorkel masks, shatter-proof face plates, a twin-cylinder aqualung, leaded belts, adjustable fins and a pair of guns.

I lifted out one of the guns and examined it. It was of Italian make, very modern, with a forearm grip and a harpoon head fitted with the latest "cutlass" carbon steel blade.

"It's fine," I said. "But it's no good."

Ritter looked at me quickly. "What do you mean, no good?"

"Nylon," I said. "It's strong, but not that strong. And it snags in coral. Haven't you any heavier line?"

"No."

"Where are your bayonets?"

Ritter looked blank.

"You need a bayonet for shark. How else are you going to hold them off?"

THERE was a chuckle behind us. Duke stiffened. "They've got to be all right!" he said fiercely. "Can't we make a double line out of the two?"

"Out of the two," I said, "you couldn't make a bootlace."

Mrs. Ritter chuckled again.

"Oh, God," Ritter moaned.

I hadn't the heart to keep at it. "Look," I said. "I've got a heavy projector on deck with steel line, bayonet, everything you need. You can borrow mine if you want to."

He looked relieved. "Thanks, Gardener. I guess you think I'm pretty green."

"We can't all be specialists," I said.

* * *

An hour before sundown we came in sight of Kuaka. The tide was down and the sea moved creamily against the wide, jagged curve of the reef. Inshore of the reef the water was dragon-toothed with coral.

"Hell!" Ritter shouted from the wheelhouse. "You've picked a fine spot."

"Cut down to one engine," I told him. "I'll guide you through."

I got forward and took him in by hand signal, watching the colour of the water. The deep purple patches were coral; the aquamarine, white sand. We crawled in until we reached the lagoon I knew from two summers back.

We dropped anchor. The clanking echo surged away, leaving us in a widening circle of silence.

I paused up forward, remembering the place. It was good to be back. A deer barked inland. A big iguana wagged up out of the water, shuddering the bushes. This was my sort of country, I thought, where I found what I wanted without ever quite knowing what that was. A kind of listening maybe, a heartbeat—my own. Maybe that was it—hearing the beat of one's own heart striking like a drum against the silence. The cool undersea, with the creak of pressure in one's ears and cool shapes weaving. That was it, I thought, watching the sun glaring and struggling behind the isthmus trees; just that.

We ate and turned in early that night.

NEXT morning at birdsong I woke the Ritters. We piled the gear into the dinghy and the boatman rowed us out to the reef. I was surprised that Mrs. Ritter had bothered to turn out. She sat facing me, wearing a bathrobe which parted over her long, honey-tanned legs. Her lips were unpainted and her hair was still untidy from bed.

Duke was like an exposed nerve-end, busting to get into the sea. He sat facing forward with the big gun cocked and his mask pushed up helmet-wise on his forehead.

When we got to the reef we stripped to our swim suits and put on our masks. Ritter thumbed the schnorkel mouthpiece against his teeth and went in.

Mrs. Ritter picked up one of the Italian guns. I cocked it for her. "Stick close to me," I said. "If and when we run into the big stuff, get back to the boat quickly."

She didn't say anything, just looked at me through her mask. The boat rocked and she was gone. I told the boatman to follow us along and went in after her.

The dawn redness died to dusk, like a switched-out light. A host of butterfly fish fluttered in my face and vanished. The woman's fins wove a pattern before me as she spiralled down palely through the early half-colours.

Ritter was ahead of us, exploring. He moved powerfully through the water with the gun probing ahead of him like a radar proboscis. He had balance, I noticed. His fin movements were smooth and he saved his arms for the gun. He was good, I thought. He had to be good. It would have killed him not to be good.

We surfaced for air. Ritter spat out his mouthpiece.

"Say!" he panted. "The place is stinking with fish. Absolutely stinking!"

"We're just the right time," I said. "If you like, I'll take you round the reef so you can get the layout. Don't rush into anything till you've tried out the gun, though. The spear is solid steel; you may find you shoot low with it."

"Sure." He tamped back his mouthpiece.

"Keep your hands off the coral. Lot of stonefish here!"

He nodded and sank until only the tip of

Continued on page 47

Batch-Bake all these Summer dishes with Cookeen! (they're so simple, you can make the whole lot in under 1 hour!)

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS . . .

Next time you're baking, try this new Cookeen batch. You can make all these four attractive dishes together in under 1 hour. Make this savoury Cheese and Bacon Flan for a summer supper snack. For dessert, these fruit-laden Strawberry Boats smothered in fresh cream. Perfect! At the same time, you'll be conjuring up Coconut Shortcakes and crunchy Date and Walnut Cookies. Watch these good things disappear when you put them on the table!

COOKEEN PASTRY

10 oz. plain or self-raising flour · 5 oz. Cookeen Half level teaspoonful salt · 2–3 tablespoonfuls cold water.

CHEESE AND BACON FLAN

***Flan Filling:** 2 eggs · 3 rashers of bacon · 2 oz. grated cheese · 1 small onion (finely chopped) 4 tablespoonfuls milk · 2 tablespoonfuls cream or evaporated milk · Pinch of cayenne · Salt to taste · 1 teaspoonful chopped parsley (optional) Hard-boiled egg, tomato and parsley for garnish.*

Make pastry (for method see Cookeen wrapper). Roll out just over half the pastry and line a 7-inch flan ring or sandwich tin. Prick well. Cut bacon into small pieces, fry lightly with the onion. Beat eggs, add rest of the ingredients and pour into flan case. Bake according to chart. Garnish.

DATE AND WALNUT COOKIES

Mix into the remaining pastry two heaped tablespoonfuls sugar, 1 oz. chopped dates and half oz. chopped walnuts. Roll out and cut into 2-inch rounds. Bake according to chart. When cold, coat with Chocolate or Coffee Glacé Icing and a halved walnut.

STRAWBERRY BOATS
COCONUT SHORTCAKES

8 oz. plain or self-raising flour · 4 oz. Cookeen Pinch of salt · 1 yolk of egg · 2 rounded teaspoonfuls castor sugar · 1–2 tablespoonfuls cold water.

Rub Cookeen into sieved flour and salt. Add sugar. Mix with the yolk of egg and water.

STRAWBERRY BOATS. Roll out half the pastry and line boat-shaped tins. Prick well. Before baking place a piece of greaseproof paper on each one and fill with baking beans. Bake according to chart. *N.B.* Paper and beans should be removed 10 minutes before pastry is cooked.

FILLING

Half lb. strawberries · Quarter pint strawberry juice · 1 rounded teaspoonful arrowroot.

When cold fill with strawberries and cover with the cooled sauce made by blending the arrowroot with the juice and boiling for 2–3 minutes.

COCONUT SHORTCAKES. Roll out remainder of the pastry to an oblong 10 inches long by 4 inches wide. Spread with raspberry jam. Bake according to chart.

TO FINISH

***Meringue:** 1 white of egg · 2 oz. castor sugar 1 oz. coconut.*

Whisk the egg white until stiff. Add half the sugar and whisk until stiff again. Fold in remaining sugar and coconut. When coconut shortcake is cooked, spread the meringue on top and return to the oven on lowest shelf to brown. Cut into fingers.

BAKING CHART

Oven set at Regulo 6 or 400° F.

CHEESE & BACON FLAN 2ND SHELF POSITION FROM THE TOP 30–40 MINUTES.
STRAWBERRY BOATS 2ND SHELF POSITION FROM THE TOP 20–25 MINUTES.
DATE & WALNUT COOKIES 4TH SHELF POSITION FROM THE TOP 15–20 MINUTES.
COCONUT SHORTCAKES BOTTOM SHELF POSITION 20–25 MINUTES.

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Beamont's rocketing aerobatics were stealing the show at the Farnborough Display. Suddenly, on his radio came the warning . . .

"Canberra—you are dropping pieces"

AGAINST THE SUN (3)

Edward Lanchbery's story of Britain's leading test pilot

IN MAY, 1945, eight months after his crash and capture by the Germans, Wing Commander Roland Beamont was released from a prison camp. Back in England, he formed the first wing of Tempest II fighters for Tiger force, but the sudden end of the Japanese war stayed their departure for the Far East. Instead he found himself leading the Tempest formation in the Battle of Britain fly-past over London.

With the war over, Beamont was for the first time faced with the problem of the future, a future which entailed the support of a wife and two children.

A few days before his capture, he had received an attractive offer from Philip Lucas, chief test pilot of Hawker's. It was the chance to become Hawker's Number Two experimental test pilot.

Beamont had already done experimental test flying for Hawker's during spells between operational tours, and the work appealed to him immensely. But scarcely had he accepted the offer when his crash over enemy lines cut short his hopes. When he saw Philip Lucas again on his return, the job had gone.

"I'm sorry, Bee," Philip Lucas said. "When we heard you were missing, we had to appoint someone else, and there is no opening on the experimental side now. You can have a job on production testing if you would like that. If not, I'll see if I can find anything for you elsewhere in the group."

Although he had expected the verdict, Beamont had hoped during his months as a prisoner-of-war that his return might not be too late. Now he had missed the chance of experimental research flying, with its pioneer development.

Reluctantly he had to turn his thoughts from preferences to essentials—a job that included flying in some form. He sent in his application for a permanent commission in the R.A.F.

Weeks passed with no news. Then, as the day for his release from the R.A.F. drew near, he obtained through Lucas the offer of a post with Gloster's as Number Three test pilot. He decided to accept. Six weeks later the letter telling him of his selection for a permanent commission arrived.

Beamont discussed the position with his wife. A permanent commission offered security and a pension on retirement. Financially, too, with

Beamont flies his Canberra. Onlookers were not impressed by its conventional lines—until he sent it screaming skywards in an almost vertical climb

Sir James Robb (right) with Sir Arthur Coningham. Robb offered Beamont a posting to the R.A.F. High Speed Flight; he refused because he wanted to be a test pilot

The P.86 fighter. Beamont flew it on a trial that into the sound barrier—then, at 650 m.p.h., he

pay and allowances the commission was more attractive. But although the appointment at Gloster's was not what he really wanted, it could lead to the type of research flying on which he'd set his heart since Philip Lucas first mooted the offer of such a job in October, 1944.

Pat Beamont made no attempt to influence her husband. So long as he was going to be happy, she would be content. A sense of responsibility made Beamont ask what duty he could expect if he accepted a commission. Was there a chance of joining the R.A.F. flight testing establishment at Farnborough or Boscombe Down for instance?

Grounded For Seven Years

He spoke to Sir James Robb, C-in-C. Fighter Command. That meeting was not an encouraging one.

"What need is there for advice?" demanded the Commander-in-Chief. "If you have been offered a permanent commission, take it."

"My problem is, sir, that I have done a fair amount of test flying and believe I still have a contribution to make in that direction."

"How many years of active flying have you done?"

"Seven, sir."

"In that case, Beamont, you can expect the next seven years on administration duties, can't you? That would be a fair balance."

Beamont waited, but there was no doubt. Sir James Robb was in earnest. "Thank you, sir," he said at last. "That is what I wanted your advice about."

Dismissing him, Robb turned back to his papers, but looked up again as Beamont reached the door. "I'm prepared to make one concession," he said.

"Before you start your 'balanced career' I will post you to the High Speed Flight under Donaldson."

The sop was inviting, but not enough. Before he had shut the door of Robb's office he had made up his mind. He would have to mark time at Gloster's until he found the opportunity he wanted.

Although he had rejected the chance of being a member of the High Speed Flight, Beamont was closely concerned with preparations for the 1946 record. When the R.A.F. decided to make a world speed record attempt in a Meteor, it fell to Gloster's to see that the aircraft was first exhaustively tested to the air force's requirements: a performance that would allow the existing record to be raised from 606 to 630 m.p.h., the target of the High Speed Flight.

In all, Beamont carried out a series of thirty experimental test flights on the speed record aircraft, and on July 9 he reached a speed of 632 m.p.h. The Meteor was ready for the High Speed Flight.

The release two days later of the official announcement of the creation of the Royal Air Force High Speed Flight manned by serving officers who alone would be permitted to attack the world record, drew considerable comment. To many, it seemed ridiculous that the R.A.F. world record bid should be made possible by the aircraft industry's own pilots, who had first to test the machine at comparable, or better, speeds, but were prevented from winning official recognition for their skill and courage.

The Gloster Aircraft Company issued a statement: "We are delivering Gloster Meteor IVs to the R.A.F. for special work in connection with the High Speed Flight. All aircraft which pass out from the Gloster works are tested by our pilots up to the maximum speed the R.A.F. would expect them to do.

"Our senior experimental pilot, Wing Commander R. P. Beamont, D.S.O., D.F.C., has flown the Meteor at speeds exceeding the world record. We are not able to run our own attempt, as all our aircraft are under the control of the Ministry of Supply."

Britain's First Jet Bomber

Before Group Captain E. C. Donaldson raised the record officially to 616 m.p.h., after encountering much difficulty with adverse weather, Beamont left Gloster's. He had written to English Electric as soon as he heard that they were building the first British jet bomber, but when time passed without news, he accepted the offer of a vacancy as a demonstration pilot at de Havilland's, hoping to transfer to the experimental side later.

He had been with de Havilland's only two months, however, when the English Electric Company invited him to attend for interview for the post of chief test pilot.

Glamour is not a word to which the aircraft industry takes kindly, but with a garage basement in the heart of a city, and a remote, deserted airfield, the setting for the birth of the world's first jet bomber was bizarre enough to satisfy the conceptions of any film producer.

As far back as 1911 one of the companies which became part of the English Electric Company had built an aeroplane for military tests. In 1923, English Electric designed a light aircraft, the Wren, which won that year's light aircraft trials at Lympne; but subsequently the aeronautics side of the business lapsed until 1938 when the firm became an aircraft shadow factory.

During the war the company manufactured other people's aircraft—Hampdens, Halifaxes and Vampires—and it was natural that the thoughts of the chairman, Sir George Nelson, should turn to designing and producing an aircraft of their own.

Free Hand To Find A Team

The opportunity came in 1944, when the Air Ministry issued a requirement for a medium bomber, powered by jet engines, for high altitude radar bombing. Sir George Nelson decided to build one.

He engaged William Petter, who had been responsible for the Whirlwind twin-engine fighter, as his chief designer and left him a free hand to appoint his own project team.

By the time Beamont was summoned for an interview at the English Electric's first design offices in Preston, the Canberra had reached the stage of a wooden mock-up.

He arrived on a wet, dismal day in October, 1946, that intensified the gloom of an industrial city. Nothing could have less inspired thoughts of flying than that drab side street of the address he had been given.

Fortunately he had time in hand, for he had walked the length of the street and was on his way back, when outside a garage that he had already passed once, he noticed the inscription: "English Electric Company, Ltd." on the side of a van.

He stopped, surprised. Building an aircraft in a garage might be in the true pioneering tradition; but the whole setting was so different from what—with his own experience of Hawker's, Gloster's and de Havilland's—he imagined as the birthplace of a modern aircraft.

He found the office of the chief designer upstairs. Petter wasted little time on preliminaries but led him promptly to the basement. The noise of men and machines at work was an insistent din in the low-roofed hollow, built to shelter cars. Dominating the scene stood the big

startled American officials. He dived it approached the level-flight speed record

wooden mock-up, the full-size replica of the bomber-to-be.

"There she is," Petter announced, pitching his voice against the noise.

Together they walked round slowly, appraising her lines. Beamont stirred with excitement. Then, regaining the quiet of the office, Petter discussed details of the project and the terms of the appointment as chief test pilot. It would be some months before they would be ready for a pilot.

There was no aerodrome yet, let alone aircraft. Petter had found himself with a full design team and nowhere to house them until he had taken over that garage as a temporary headquarters.

Beamont returned to de Havilland's with the position left that he was to be notified definitely in due course; but from the way the interview had gone, he had no qualms about the outcome. At the end of December the letter arrived offering him the post on the terms he had asked.

Somewhat diffidently he discussed the offer with de Havilland's chief test pilot, John Cunningham.

"What's the trouble?" Cunningham asked directly. "Money?"

Beamont shook his head. "No, it's the chance of experimental flying. I don't want to spend the rest of my life knocking back pink gins with customers and occasionally putting a Vampire through its paces for them. Frankly I took the job of business demonstration pilot in the hope that I could later join you and Geoffrey de Havilland on the experimental side."

"All right, wait a day or two, Bee," Cunningham suggested, "and I'll see what can be arranged."

A week later he delivered the verdict. "I'm sorry, Bee, but they won't let you transfer to this section."

Kept Feet On The Ground

In May, 1947, Beamont reported for duty with the English Electric Company, a test pilot without aircraft or airfield, his cockpit an office over the Preston garage.

Most of the first three months was spent living with and absorbing every detail of this forerunner of Britain's jet bombers. This, though his feet stayed on the ground, was the heart of experimental flying: watching the abstruse formulae and the blueprints crystallize into spar, wing section or control, knowing, as a musician knows the melody from reading a score, how the aircraft will perform.

Confirmation of theory can come only in practice, however. There was no other jet bomber in existence to act as a yardstick, and in particular no guidance from previous experience to the problems of handling a heavy aircraft at very high speed above 40,000 feet.

Began High Altitude Trials

While he was with Gloster's, Beamont had taken the Meteor IV through its early experimental programme, and he knew something of its high altitude potentialities. He mentioned this to Petter, and the loan of a Meteor IV was arranged through the Ministry of Supply for flight research at high altitude.

Meanwhile, English Electric had taken over Warton, a deserted airfield which had been used during the war by the Americans for a maintenance unit. Two works policemen were put on duty to guard the gate and the derelict hangar in which the Meteor was housed.

There was no radio, no flying control. The watch tower was a silent monument, the windowless flight offices were sleeping in their shrouds of cobweb, damp and dust.

For six months Beamont drove to the airfield with a ground crew of three—a foreman, an aircraft fitter and an engine fitter—to carry out inspections and service the Meteor. In solitude undisturbed by the companionable static and the patter of flying control in his earphones, he took off for the frontiers of his new world, high above 40,000 feet.

Month after month he explored the effect of high altitude on the Meteor's handling qualities, the controls, the climb and dive, acceleration and the onset of compressibility troubles.

Valuable though it proved for altitude research, the Meteor IV was too small an aircraft to give English Electric much practical benefit in preparation for flying the Canberra. No jet aircraft in the country at that time approached the size of the bomber under construction. The only comparable aircraft were America's Boeing B.45, B.47 and Martin B.48, then in an advanced state of development.

To provide experience in flying big jets, arrangements were therefore made through the Ministry of Supply for Beamont to go on a flight mission to the United States in May, 1948. Unfortunately, when he arrived over there, two of the aircraft which he had crossed the Atlantic to fly—the Boeing B.47 and Martin B.48—were grounded.

Somewhat disconsolately, he was waiting at

Continued on page 35

Beamont's wife Pat, with their youngest daughters Patricia (left) and Elizabeth. Pat knew that her husband's heart was set on experimental flying; she never tried to dissuade him

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"Woodrow goes faster than anyone," says his passenger, Colin Attwood. When he is jockeying for position, the crowds move back from the ropes

Fred Woodrow scorches the grass tracks

by DAVID MILLWOOD

His rough-riding style of motor-cycling needs steel nerves, an eye for tactics, and an acrobatic passenger. Then, only spectators mind the bumps

A CROWD OF FIVE THOUSAND at a grass track motor-cycle meeting last year were yelling themselves hoarse as their idol, Fred Woodrow, swept into second place in the final of the sidecar handicap. Woodrow was within a few feet of the leader, Fred French, and preparing to overtake on the next bend, when French's foot slipped and he missed a gear. Woodrow swerved to avoid him, missed a gear himself and charged straight into the crowd at fifty miles an hour.

"People went flying in all directions," says one witness. "For a few seconds there was complete pandemonium. I saw Woodrow flung into the air and his machine rear up and land on top of someone. Everyone seemed to be screaming. I was afraid to find out how many people had been killed." In fact, no one was killed. Only one spectator, a young woman with a cut leg, was taken to the ambulance.

Woodrow escaped with a shaking—and took part in the next race on a borrowed machine. His passenger, who was pinned underneath the sidecar, was only bruised. The moment he missed his gear and knew that he must hit the crowd, Woodrow had aimed his machine at a tree stump in the roped-off "no-man's-land" between the track and the spectators. The tree stump took the full force of the impact.

Woodrow's presence of mind, which on this occasion helped to save the spectators, coupled with a reckless determination, has put him among the top grass-track sidecar racers in the country.

At twenty-five he is champion of the tracks in south-east England, having won the area championships two years running by methods which have thrilled the crowds, earned him more than £200 in prize money and, according to one of his supporters, "scared the living daylight out of everyone."

In the south-eastern centre (Kent, Sussex and Surrey), where grass-track racing has the largest following—up to fifty thousand people watch it every Sunday during the summer—Woodrow has a reputation for daredevil riding. Spectators respond to his shock tactics in two ways. They cheer his dashing style and hair-raising manoeuvres—and often move back from the ropes when they see him jockeying for position.

The track at Leatherhead, Surrey, is so bumpy that some riders now refuse to race there. Woodrow is not one of them. Leading in

Continued on page 32

For a year she had slaved in her garden. There'd be no more defeats. She would trounce this city upstart in the . . .

War of the roses

by L. S. HOWARTH

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

YOU COULD ALWAYS tell which was Miss Lacey's house because of the roses. In other people's front gardens you would find a pleasant mixture of flowers, but in Miss Lacey's the roses reigned absolute. If any lesser breeds of flowers—carnations, say, or lupins or delphiniums—should creep into the grounds, they were soon put in their place—round at the back of the house in the kitchen garden, where they could fulfil a useful purpose by separating one row of peas from the next, or by screening the refuse bin or compost heap.

The display of roses, from the earliest blooms in June to the very tardiest in November, was magnificent. People would make it the focal point of their Sunday afternoon walks; and Miss Lacey, behind the soft blue of her drawing-room curtains, would covertly watch these pilgrims and smile gently in satisfaction.

It followed almost as a matter of course that every year Miss Lacey's exhibit won the first prize for roses at the local flower show. Indeed, for ten years at least she had had virtually no opposition at all.

Fortunately, however, she was modest in her triumphs, and when she slipped out of the front gate after an early lunch to attend the sixty-seventh of these annual shows, there was no false pride or vainglory anywhere in her. Her roses, which Mead the gardener had tenderly taken down immediately after breakfast and staged with experienced cunning, were bound to have won the first prize again.

Once outside the Church Meadow, she paused and smiled on the scene. It was a bright, sunny day, and everyone from the village—and, indeed, a lot of people from a number of other villages, too—had turned up in their gayest and smartest array. There were sideshows for the children, games booths and a fortune-teller's tent, and three red-faced men in blue serge suits were preparing a running track for the sports meeting which would be starting later in the afternoon.

Lovely, Miss Lacey thought, lovely—and so English . . . like the rose.

Reminded of her main interest, she smiled again and passed on to the cool marquee which housed the flowers and vegetables. Inside the tent, there was a pleasant fragrance. Miss Lacey savoured it with restrained delight, enjoying the unique feeling which comes from having a canvas roof over one's head and green grass under one's feet.

She glanced at the shallots and the leeks and the potatoes. All very well, of course, and very necessary, her expression said, but what an odd whim to want to go to such trouble to grow them so perfectly when the time could just as well have been devoted to roses.

And now, at last, her leisurely progress changed. She was approaching the roses.

She would have recognized her own roses anywhere. Peace, Ophelia and The Doctor were representing her this year—and there they were! She made straight towards them as though they were long-lost school friends whom she had just caught sight of in the crowd, greeting them with a smile of welcome. How well they looked! How artfully Mead had arranged them! How delightfully they blended! How——

She paused in her raptures, puzzled. There was a blue ticket beside her entry. Odd, that. The first-prize tickets had always been red. Why on earth had the committee taken it into its head to change them?

She looked more closely, visited by an impossible, preposterous supposition.

It was not impossible and not preposterous after all. The committee had not changed the colours. The blue ticket was clearly inscribed: "Class 9. Second Prize. Miss A. Lacey."

Second Prize! *Second* . . . !

Bewildered, outraged and indignant, Miss Lacey looked along the stand. There was the red ticket, lying beside a rich vase of subtly fused oranges, yellows and coppers. But she hardly looked at the roses, only at the writing.

"Class 9. First Prize. Mr. F. J. Gerrard."

She wrinkled her nose. Gerrard? It was a name she had never seen in the show before, not a local name at all. There were no families of Gerrards anywhere within miles, she was sure. But no one would come from any distance just to win 10s. at a small affair like this. Puzzled, she looked round for Mead.

HE was there all right, watching her anxiously like a child who had done wrong and hopes to escape punishment. He was almost unrecognizable in his Sunday suit, but as Miss Lacey beckoned he came forward.

"Pity 'bout that, miss," he said diffidently.

"Second!" Miss Lacey breathed. "Second!"

"Can't be helped, miss." Mead shook his head sadly. "They were rare fine blooms that beat us."

Miss Lacey gave them only a passing glance again. There were no roses like her own anywhere. None at all. "And who," she demanded, "is this Gerrard?"

Mead was about to answer when a strange voice spoke from behind her shoulders.

"As a matter of fact," it said, "I am Gerrard."

Miss Lacey whirled round, her cheeks the colour of a Crimson Glory. The speaker was a man obviously well into middle age, but still by no means elderly. He was dressed with considerable quiet taste and his plump face was lit by pleasantly bright, humorous eyes. "Our roses seem to have introduced us," he said. "You *are* Miss Lacey, aren't you?"

"Of course. I must have sounded," Miss Lacey said, "appallingly rude just then."

"It was understandable. I've heard about your record here. It must be very annoying to grow lovely roses like these and miss the first prize." He smiled affable forgiveness. "I'd like to congratulate you."

"For ten years," said Miss Lacey, "I have won firsts."

"I'm sorry to spoil the sequence."

"Not at all."

"You were asking who I am. I'm afraid I'm no one very remarkable. I retired from the city at Christmas and took a little cottage called Sunny View, off the London road. I've always liked roses, and the situation seemed ideal for them."

"I see," Miss Lacey said, pulling herself

As the show drew nearer

citement grew. Outside Miss Lacey's garden, villagers stood and whispered. And what they said made Miss Lacey wonder—about her rival's roses

together. Even if she could not bring herself to be cordial, at least she must be polite. "I must congratulate you, too."

"Thank you." Mr. Gerrard waved a deprecating hand towards his prizewinning vase. "I did get quite a nice little group together. But I hope to do much better next year, of course, when I'm more settled down."

"You can't do much better than a first." Miss Lacey noticed with regret that there was a touch of acidity in her voice. But a man who began by congratulating her for being second, and then had the impudence to suggest that he had barely been trying when he won—well, really! "If you'll excuse me," she said, "I must go."

She had never enjoyed a flower show so little in her life. The village brass band, blowing its heart out among the daisies in Church Meadow, seemed raucous and puerile. The sideshows were dull, nothing like they had been in the old days, the tea was too strong and sweet; and even the children's obstacle and egg and spoon races could not amuse her. Clearly, that blue ticket was going to take a great deal of working off.

The very next day, even though it was Sunday, she went into conference with Mead.

"The trouble is," she explained to him earnestly, "that we've been taking things too easily. We've been resting on our laurels."

"Maybe we have, miss," Mead agreed gravely.

"We've been short of competition."

"You're right there, miss." Mead scratched his head to stimulate his mental activity. "But that there Mr. Gerrard—oh, he's got a lovely touch, miss! Now, them McGredy's Yellows he put in the show—ah!" His voice expired in wordless admiration.

"I dare say they were very nice." Miss Lacey's voice was so brisk that it practically seized the old man by the shoulders and shook him. "But I'd like to remind you that between us, Mead, you and I have nearly eighty years' experience of growing roses. We should be able to do as well as Mr. Gerrard any day."

"I'm not saying we *can't*, miss——"

"And I'm saying we jolly well *can*!" Her eye took on a fierce glint that had not been seen there for thirty years. "And, what's more, we're going to start working for it from tomorrow morning!"

"Ay, ay, miss," said Mead, who liked to foster a tradition that he had once served in the Royal Navy.

"To begin with," Miss Lacey said, "we're going to have *more* roses."

Mead's jaw dropped. He surveyed the front garden, where the neat rows of rose bushes were already crammed like spectators at a Test match. "Beats me, miss," he confessed, "where you're going to shove 'em in."

"Round the back," Miss Lacey said promptly. "We're going to turn half the kitchen garden over to roses. We'll keep the asparagus bed and the strawberries and the fruit trees, but as for stuff like potatoes and peas and carrots—well, we'll put up with the shop ones for the time being."

"If you say so, miss," Mead agreed regretfully. He was remembering that he liked a few

In the fence a huge gap had appeared, and through it had come a herd of cows, goats and a dog. And the goats were guzzling the best of the roses

rows of potatoes. Once they were in, they were nice and easy to look after.

"In fact, you can start as soon as you can on the places where the earliest varieties have finished. Then we can start preparing the ground *thoroughly*."

Mead nodded understanding, but conveyed no enthusiasm.

"I'm writing away for as many catalogues as possible. I don't want to miss any promising new kinds. We're going to buy some new fertilizers, too."

"Bain't no fertilizers, miss," Mead said, "half so good as any muck."

"Nonsense," said Miss Lacey. "If the scientists can invent bombs to blow half the world up, surely they can think of some little thing to make roses grow a bit better."

For the next twelve months Mead worked harder than he had ever worked in his life. Miss Lacey, normally the most indulgent of employers, became a changed woman. She urged her gardener to greater efforts with the remorseless zeal of a villain from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Nor could he reasonably complain, for she was no less diligent herself, and she cast off social activities almost completely.

All this effort did not go unnoticed in the village. Even during the winter, when there were no roses in bloom, people would walk past on fine days just to discover what new plot poor Mead was laboriously turning over to the cultivation of roses. New bushes arrived almost daily, many from nurseries in remote parts of the country, and they were all carefully accommodated in land which had once been sacred to the brussels sprout and the cauliflower.

As spring grew into summer and the date of the show approached, local excitement became even more intense. Instead of plots of black earth and bare, spiky little bushes, there were now real roses to see. The house was nothing but a little island in a gay, turbulent sea of roses. You could smell the house long before you could see it. Even the goats and cows in the adjoining field came over to the fence to enjoy the display.

Connoisseurs of the situation, however, were not satisfied with seeing only what Miss Lacey had to offer. They exerted themselves so far as to walk up the London road to Sunny View to inspect the progress of Mr. Gerrard's roses. From these reconnaissances, word reached Miss Lacey that there were some rare beauties among them.

Unable to contain her curiosity, she went out a week before the show to see for herself. She did not admit this, however, to Mead, and it is possible that she did not even admit it to herself. It was a long time, she explained to her gardener as she set out, since she had been in that area, and she felt that the walk would do her good.

At Sunny View, however, after a furtive peep to make sure that she was unobserved, she stopped and peered over the railings. There was good stuff there, certainly. Those Talismans, for instance, those Lady Sylvias, those President Hoovers—outside her own garden she had never seen anything like them.

"Now, Miss Lacey, won't you come and look more closely?" It was only the second time that Mr. Gerrard had spoken to her, but each time he had surprised her.

She turned, flushed, in time to see him dismounting from a bicycle. "Oh, thank you!" she said. She found the invitation a little embarrassing: one commander in a battle does not invite the opposing general to look round the lines on the eve of the engagement. Besides, in return he might wish to look at her roses, and that would never do.

"My housekeeper," Mr. Gerrard said, "will have tea all ready for me. Please come in."

"Well, it's very good of you——" Feeling oddly like some intrepid spy about to probe the secrets of the Kremlin, Miss Lacey let herself be led through the door, gay with a riot of clematis.

It was a nice tea, a very nice tea. It was clear that the housekeeper had a high regard for Mr. Gerrard. But Miss Lacey ate very little and was content merely to keep up her end of the conversation. Mr. Gerrard talked about a great many things, but not about roses. He was well informed and interesting, and it was not until the tea-wagon had been pushed away for a quarter of an hour that he touched upon the subject nearest to both their hearts.

"Perhaps, Miss Lacey," he said, "you'd like to see my roses, so that you'll know what you have to beat."

"If you're sure you don't mind——"

Mr. Gerrard silenced her fluttering objections with a benevolent smile. "I'm only too pleased," he said, "to let my roses see someone who will really appreciate them."

Miss Lacey soon saw that they were very good roses indeed. Public opinion had been quite right—it would be indeed a close battle for the first prize. Mead was going to have to excel himself in the next seven days.

She went away impressed by Mr. Gerrard's charm, but with her resolution unsapped. All she needed now was a fine week that would not spoil the blooms, and the flower show should produce the battle of the century. But with herself, definitely herself, the victor.

The fine week materialized perfectly. Not a drop of rain fell and the sun was never so dangerously hot that it could scorch the most delicate of the blooms. After a last-minute inspection with Mead, selecting the warriors to carry the honour of the house on the great day, Miss Lacey went to bed tired but with a great feeling of satisfaction and achievement.

She was too excited and anxious to sleep well. At seven o'clock, after a fitful night, she got out of bed and walked across to her window to reassure herself that the weather had not treacherously broken at the last minute.

She sighed with relief. All was well. The sky was still blue, the air tranquil and soft. It was just the day for a flower show, just the day for roses, just the day for a sweet, sweet victory. She paused in her thoughts, aware of a foreign sound—a strange, unidentifiable noise from beneath her.

Puzzled, she looked down into the garden. And then, with a cry of dismay, she grasped at her curtains to steady herself. For in the hedge a huge gap had appeared. And in the garden, in her front garden and her back garden, amid all the cherished results of twelve months' unremitting labours, there roamed a herd of cows, four goats and a large dog.

Miss Lacey moaned. It could only be a nightmare. If she closed her eyes and opened them again, she would realize that. She closed her eyes tightly, counted a slow five, and tremulously opened them again.

The scene was unchanged. Still a herd of cows, four goats and a large dog.

The dog was apparently merely enjoying itself with the exuberance of youth, and the cows were ambling around sedately with no other motive apparently than to try a change of air. It was the goats who were taking a strictly gastronomical attitude towards the situation. Roses, it appeared, were what had been missing from their diet for a long time: and, doubtless with an acute intuitive recognition of a bit of good vitamin C when they saw it, they were guzzling like hungry schoolboys at a birthday party.

Miss Lacey, distraught, opened her window. She shouted, she screamed, she threw a hairbrush and then the remainder of her companion set. But it was plain that only desperate measures would meet the position.

She flung open her bedroom door, bounded down the staircase like a young tiger and, pausing only to pick up the stoutest umbrella from

Continued on page 50

★ **'MAGIC' SPONGE CAKE 1 large tin Nestlé's Condensed Milk, 8 oz. flour, 2 teaspoonfuls baking powder, ½ teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda, 4 oz. margarine, ¼ pint water, 1 teaspoonful vanilla, pinch salt, 3 oz. cocoa (optional).**

Sift together the dry ingredients. Add the Nestlé's Condensed Milk, melted fat, water and vanilla. Beat until thoroughly mixed. Pour into two 8-inch sandwich tins and bake in a moderate oven 375°F. (Mark 4) for 35 minutes. Coat with 'Magic' chocolate icing.

'MAGIC' CHOCOLATE ICING 1 large tin Nestlé's Condensed Milk, 4 oz. Nestlé's or Peter's Chocolate, 1 tablespoonful of water.

Melt the Chocolate in the top of a double saucepan or in a basin in a pan of hot water. Add the Nestlé's Condensed Milk, and stir over boiling water for 5 minutes or until thick. Add the water and beat well. Spread on to the cold cake. This makes enough icing to cover the tops and sides of two 8-inch sandwich cakes.

FILLING Mix 4 oz. icing sugar into 2 oz. margarine until creamy.

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Sister Bunnett never turns back

by JOHN ENNIS

Wharfedale's district nurse never fails her patients. She's always ready to brave the rugged Yorkshire moorland, even if she has to struggle through a blizzard on a pony

THE JEEP LURCHED OFF the road and crawled along a moorland track. As it bumped two-and-a-half miles to a farm where a baby was due to be born that night, the two farmers in the jeep laughed at their passenger, the district nurse. She sat with her eyes tightly closed; the view picked out by the headlights was the edge of a ravine, then emptiness.

The baby was born at about 4.20 a.m. that night in Easter week, 1952, two hours after Sister Margaret Bunnett arrived at the isolated farmhouse. Sister Bunnett settled into a chair for what was left of the night. She carried out the routine morning visit to the mother and newly-born baby, then walked the two-and-a-half miles back to her car, parked at the roadside, and set off on her normal daily round of visits to the sick, the very young and the very old in the villages and moorland farms around Wharfedale, in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Walked Nearly Ninety Miles

In the late afternoon she drove the eleven miles from her home in Kettlewell to re-visit the mother and child. This time, with less urgency, she walked along the hill track. For the next three days she called at the farm morning and evening, and for the following eleven days she made the journey once a day. To look after that one baby she drove more than 370 miles and walked nearly ninety miles—half of them uphill.

For twenty years, Sister Bunnett has tackled the health problems of about 850 people with the calm, experienced air of the professional nurse. Her charges are scattered over seventy-five square miles of some of the most rugged country in Britain. A State Registered Nurse and State Certificated Midwife earning about £560 a year, she is ready to drive out day or night in answer to a telephone call or a knock at her cottage door. She is allowed 168 hours off duty every four weeks. "But I should be very mean if somebody was ill or injured and I refused to go," she says. Instead, she accumulates her time off and spends an occasional few days visiting her family in her native Shropshire. While she is away, Sister Beatrice Anne Priestley, the district nurse in Grassington seven miles away, deputizes.

Fourteen doctors have patients in Sister Bunnett's district, but the nearest doctor lives six miles from Kettlewell. Her boss, the

On her visiting round, Sister Bunnett stops to deliver a baby's cod liver oil. She has taught isolated families how to deal with emergencies

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM KEMP

Margaret Bunnett drives more than a thousand miles a month to care for 850 people around Wharfedale. She used to do her rounds on a bicycle

Medical Officer of Health fifteen miles away in Skipton, says: "Because of her isolation, Sister Bunnett has to carry a good deal of responsibility not borne by the ordinary district nurse. People often go to her first, and ask if she thinks they should call their doctor."

Recently a man called on Sister Bunnett while he was in Kettlewell and told her that his young daughter was ill. "A chill," he said. "I don't think there is much wrong with her." But his description of the child's condition disturbed the nurse, and she drove thirteen miles to his home.

The girl's pulse rate, temperature and other symptoms made Sister Bunnett suspect appendicitis. She telephoned a doctor, and he told her to take the child to hospital. She placed the girl, surrounded by hot water bottles, in her car, and drove in to find the operating theatre prepared. A surgeon quickly confirmed the nurse's suspicions, and operated.

During her first eighteen months in Wharfedale, Sister Bunnett went her rounds on a bicycle. Today she covers an average of eleven hundred miles a month in her car, and draws a mileage allowance from West Riding County Council. But in the rough weather that hits the moors in winter she often has to use whatever transport best fits the job.

Though no horsewoman, she once set out on horseback for Litton, eight miles away, after a heavy snowfall. A farmer accompanied her on her mount's stable companion. The journey took two hours each way. The horses refused to walk on untrodden snow: at every drift the riders had to dismount and pull the horses through behind them.

The next day she tried to ride to Litton alone. "You'll soon be back," said the farmer. After the horse had thrown her three times in a quarter of a mile, it turned for home. The farmer rode with her again. Her horse was the kind that will walk away from its stable only in the wake of another horse.

Carried Patient On Sledge

In one blizzard, she set out to go thirteen miles on a pony accompanied by an Italian boy. At one point she felt she could go no farther, but the boy insisted. "Farmer says forward, Miss," he told her. The farmer for whom he worked had told him that in no circumstances was he to turn back. Sister Bunnett had to keep going. That journey ended with both of them on the pony's back. Later that night she was called out to the same place. This time she rode in a borrowed donkey cart.

One Sunday morning she had to take a man with a strangulated hernia to hospital. He lived on a hillside, and Sister Bunnett had to find a way to get him through the snow to the road. She borrowed a sledge and got some farmers to pull it while she walked at the side, tending the sick man. Villagers watched in silence as the sledge came gently down to the nurse's car.

Sister Bunnett's husband, Major George Bunnett, was a regular soldier for thirty-two years. On their wedding day in March, 1942, Major Bunnett arrived in Skipton to find his way to Kettlewell blocked with snow. He got a pass to travel to Grassington in a special train taking out a guard for a crashed aircraft. There he was given a lift in a car, but after finding a way round the foot of Deadman's Hill, he discovered that the narrow road was blocked by a small car that had come to meet him. The occupants of both cars lifted the smaller car bodily off the road, drove the other past, then turned the small car to face Kettlewell. Major Bunnett was in time for the ceremony. But the wedding cake was at the village of Arncliffe, five miles away. It arrived a week after the wedding.

Recognized by the fiercely independent people of Wharfedale as a universal friend in need, Sister Bunnett often has to meet demands for her services that are not strictly within the scope of a district nurse. A diabetic woman of seventy-six wanted to visit an isolated farm her nephews had recently bought. Her nurse, she insisted, must go with her. Sister Bunnett and her husband packed sandwiches and took the old lady for a picnic. Though his wife warned him to keep to the main track, Major Bunnett tried

"I can't even raise a whisper till I've had my

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to find a short cut. The countryside is so rough that it took him two hours to find the track again.

Sister Bunnett has often given farmers advice on the treatment of sick animals. Some time ago a small dog was given a Caesarian operation by a veterinary surgeon. Unable to take the dog to the vet every day for dressings, the owner appealed to Sister Bunnett for help. She included the dog in her daily round of calls. When it saw her, the dog rolled over on its back to allow her to change the bandages.

Odd Private Cures

Besides being district nurse and midwife in the Kettlewell area, Sister Bunnett is the local health visitor. Many villagers call her "Doctor" Bunnett. Over the years she has taught people how to help themselves in emergencies until she arrives. On her advice, many isolated families have their own first-aid kits. But some of the older people of Wharfedale still trust to odd remedies of their own.

One of Sister Priestley's patients is an old man whose leg was badly cut one day when he was kicked by a horse he was shoeing.

In return for her visits to dress the wound after it had been stitched, the old man gave Sister Priestley a bottle of embrocation he makes to his own formula. It consists of acetic acid, turpentine and ducks' eggs. "I tried it once on a stiff knee," says Sister Priestley. "It was quite good."

Among Sister Bunnett's patients once were three elderly brothers, all bachelors, who shared a farmhouse. However ill they were, they looked after themselves on Christmas Day and Good Friday. Because of some obscure superstition or tradition they barred their house to women on those two days. In winter they kept a pan of heated tar bubbling just inside the kitchen door. When Sister Bunnett arrived they always asked if she had been near people with influenza.

She usually had. "Then have a stir at the tar pan before you come in," one of the brothers would say. "Nothing like the smell of tar for killing germs."

THE END

FRED WOODROW SCORCHES THE GRASS TRACKS

Continued from page 25

a closely fought race at Leatherhead last year he hit a bump, somersaulted over the handlebars and sprawled unconscious in the path of on-coming riders. The front wheel of one machine missed his head by a few inches.

Bumps are one of the main hazards of grass-track racing. All tracks are bumpy in places. They are simply roped-off circuits on fields which motor-cycle clubs hire from local farmers for about £30, or a percentage of the profit on the meeting. On the fastest track in the south-east, at Frinstead, near Maidstone, solo machines reach speeds of 85-90 m.p.h. The fastest combinations, like Woodrow's, which are lower-geared and carry more weight, seldom get beyond 75 m.p.h.

If it were possible to go faster, Woodrow would do so. He regularly breaks track records. At Capel, Surrey, one day last year, he broke the existing record, then bettered his own speed three times in later races.

A lanky six-footer with light blue eyes and a prominent nose, Woodrow demands the utmost of himself, his passenger and his machine. He has discarded more than one passenger who signalled him to slow down. "If they can't take it," he says, "then they're no good to me."

Risks For Passenger

His present passenger is Colin Attwood, a twenty-year-old apprentice carpenter who, says Woodrow, knows instinctively what to do. Attwood has no complaints about Woodrow's ruthless tactics, even when he is thrown off the sidecar or has to lean out with the front wheel of a bike they have overtaken a few inches away from the back of his head. "Fred goes faster than anyone," he says, "but he always knows what he is up to."

Not every rider and passenger maintain their partnership on the same terms of mutual respect. One former champion who was beaten by the Woodrow technique turned on his

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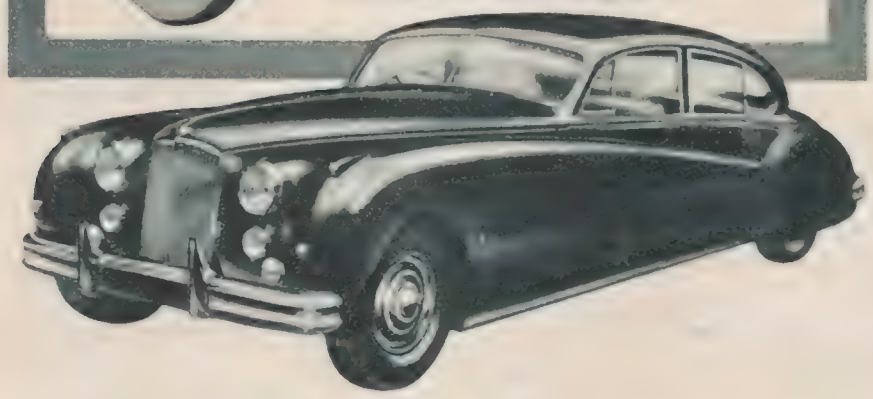

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passenger and accused him of losing the race: ever since then he has ridden solo.

Another rider who belittled his passenger's rôle was confidently leading on the last lap of a race when he was flung violently out of the saddle. Regaining consciousness, he asked what had happened. Someone explained to him that his passenger, helping to manoeuvre the machine round the previous corner, had fallen off the sidecar. The crowd yelled a warning, but it was lost in the roar of the engines. At the next bend, without the weight of the passenger, the sidecar had tipped over.

Woodrow takes his racing with professional seriousness. At the beginning of this season he was still involved in correspondence with officials of the Auto-Cycle Union, which controls the sport, concerning an incident a year ago when, he claims, he was unjustly disqualified.

"We would have been willing to let the matter drop," says an A.C.U. official, "but Woodrow has a habit of hanging on to the bitter end—on and off the track."

During a recent handicap race he had a breakdown on the first lap and dropped out. When the commentator announced over the loudspeakers that he had "blown a plug," officials and spectators counted him out of the running. But in a few seconds he was back on the track with a new plug fitted. He regained sufficient ground to win a place and £1 in prize money. "I always carry a spare plug on my belt," he explained after the race, "and a plug spanner strapped to the frame."

Woodrow divides the money that he wins into three: "one third for my passenger, one third for myself and one third for the bike." He reckons to spend about 30s. on a day's racing, for fuel—wood alcohol at 6s. 7d. a gallon—transport, and other incidentals. But he seldom leaves a track without £10-£25 in his pocket; two years ago he won £32 in a single afternoon's racing.

To stay in one race, he kept on after the sidecar tyre had burst. He maintained his lead until, on the last lap, his back tyre burst too. His machine, out of control, threw him into the air. He landed on his head.

When he got home that night he accounted for the sticking plaster on his face by saying that a spanner had slipped in his hand. "I didn't want to alarm my mother. She worries about me enough as it is."

Shot Into Ambulance

A team of the St. John Ambulance Brigade stands by at every grass-track meeting. "When I was a newcomer to grass tracks," says one ambulance man, "I used to be concerned when I saw a rider flung off and would rush across to him at once. Now I wait and see what happens. Nine times out of ten he picks himself up and climbs back on to his machine. But when one rider lost control, he careered off the track into the back of the ambulance. The doors were open and he shot straight in head first, knocking himself out as he fell."

Crash helmets and heavy protective clothing help to prevent serious injuries. Woodrow wears padded breeches, a padded leather jacket, a crash helmet (painted blue and white in the colours of his club, the Owls), heavy lace-up boots, a wide body-belt, goggles, and a silk scarf over his mouth to keep out the dust. Attwood wears the same, with some extra padding in the seat of his breeches. He is grateful for the added protection when he has to crouch close to the ground and every time that he hits the marker stakes. As one of Woodrow's favourite tricks is to pass on the inside round a bend, this happens often.

Another of Woodrow's tricks is to gain a few inches by taking bumps at speed while most other competitors slow down. Not even Woodrow is reckless enough to take bumps flat out—it is essential to keep some power in hand to control the machine when it lands. Les Taylor, a former champion noted for his daring, persistently ignored this advice. It almost cost him his life. On the track at Frinstead he crashed and his machine rolled on top of him. He is now semi-paralysed, but attends meetings regularly as a spectator. Last year, at Capel, he presented Woodrow with the cup for the south-eastern championship.

"Hotted-up" Engines

Many riders are also skilled mechanics. Woodrow, who lives near Westerham, Kent, has a fully equipped garage which includes a lathe, grinding machine, electric drill and welding apparatus. Last winter he spent £100 on completely rebuilding his machine. Racing combinations are usually adapted road machines, with strengthened frames and engines which are "hotted-up" in various ingenious ways. One method is to increase the bore of the inlet valve port to allow six or seven times the normal mixture into the combustion chamber.

"The secret of adapting an engine for racing," Woodrow says, "is to know how to increase its performance without appreciably raising the compression ratio."

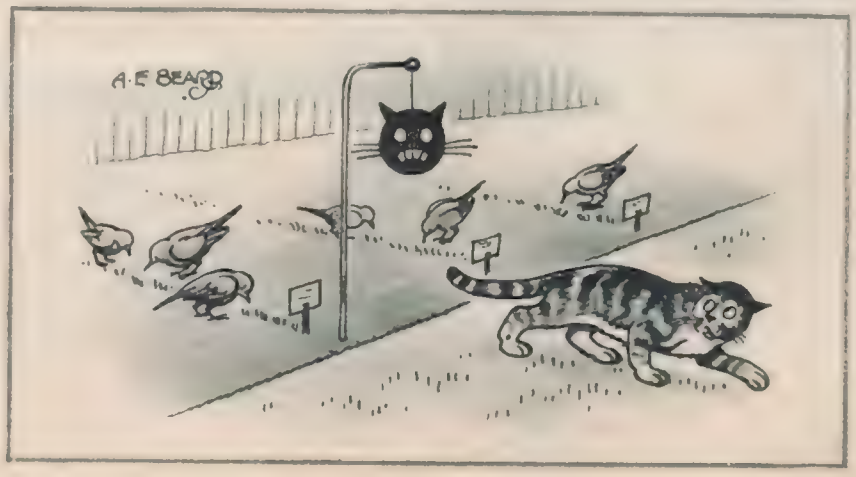
To guard against accidents, Woodrow takes a large selection of spares to every meeting. But he was caught napping recently when, after stripping the threads of the cylinder base studs on the engine during practice, he found that he had no spares. An appeal over the loudspeakers produced some coach bolts from another competitor. With these, and the handle of a wire brush wedged between the frame and the cylinder to keep it in position, he made a temporary repair, collected a first and a second in the two sidecar events and earned £10 in prize money.

Woodrow's enthusiasm for sidecar racing dates to a day five years ago when he borrowed a motor-cycle combination from a friend. He had ridden solo machines before, but this was his first experience of handling a "chair."

"I had been told about the sidecar technique for taking a left-hand bend. Instead of shutting off, you accelerate and drive the bike round the chair. This sounded all right in theory, but when it came to putting it into practice I was going much too fast and was scared stiff. My instinct told me to brake. Luckily, I didn't, but did just as I had been told.

"I sailed round the bend with all my fear gone and with a wonderful feeling of exhilaration. If I had braked, I would have gone straight on—into a brick wall."

THE END



Guess What?

by GLYN DANIEL

THIS instrument is made of cast iron with wooden handles. It measures eighteen inches long. Is it . . .

(a) A blacksmith's pliers?
(b) A branding iron?
(c) A pair of wine tongs?
(d) A lamplighter's key?

Glyn Daniel tells you more on page 36

AGAINST THE SUN

Continued from page 23

Wright-Patterson Field for a flight in the B.45 when he was hailed by William Perring, then Director of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, who was on a visit to the United States.

"Hallo, Bee," he said. "How are you getting on?"

"I'm not," Beamont answered. "It looks as though I'll get a flight in the B.45, but that's all."

They discussed the position of jet aircraft development in the United States, and particularly North American Aviation Corporation's P.86, the new experimental swept-wing fighter which reports credited with supersonic speed.

"Now a crack at that," said Beamont wistfully, "would make the journey worth while."

Perring smiled. "Experience of swept-wing flying, is that it? All right, I am going to the Pentagon tomorrow and I'll see if it can be organized. There's no harm in trying."

Within twenty-four hours the authority for the flight had arrived, and Beamont flew to Muroc airfield where the P.86 was based.

Wings Were Clipped

George Welsh, North American Aviation's chief project test pilot, greeted him warmly. A lean, sandy man in the early thirties with crew-cut hair and a deeply lined forehead, he had a slow drawl and an infectious grin. "So you want to do a trip in the P.86?" he said to Beamont. "Fine. It's fixed for first thing in the morning. Let's take a look at her."

The appearance of the P.86 was little like Beamont's own conception of the tapering, dart-like lines that a supersonic aircraft should have. The P.86 was squat and stubby, with short, clipped wings that looked inadequate for lifting the heavy, bullet-nosed fuselage.

If the thing does fly faster than sound, he thought to himself, it won't be a question of piercing but blasting its way through the barrier.

Welsh briefed him thoroughly on the aircraft's performance and limitations, and its flying characteristics. "You'll notice that with the swept-back wing, the ailerons are much more sensitive," he said.

"The P.86 has been flying up to 35,000 and 36,000 feet, and we have dived it to Mach 1.02 [Mach 1.0 represents the speed of sound]. That won't interest you, though. If you do come up against compressibility effects you'll find a change of trim and a dropping of the wing, but she stays easy to control.

"You'll have to keep an eye on your fuel consumption," he added. "There won't be that much to spare."

Ribbing The Limey

Back at the flight test offices, Beamont met some of the North American Aviation pilots who had no inhibitions about extolling the virtues of the P.86 and its supersonic capabilities, and gently ribbing the "Limey" pilot about a world of flight faster than sound, unknown to the British. Not for a moment did they imagine that he would take their remarks as a challenge, and in fact Beamont suffered the leg-pulling good humouredly, without any real intention of doing so.

At that time particularly, a pilot did not take up a strange aircraft for the first time with the deliberate intention of diving faster than sound.

"Chuck" Yeager had been thrust through the "barrier" at Mach 1.5 (one and a half times the speed of sound) in the rocket-propelled Bell X-1 released from a Super Fortress; and the P.86 was claimed to be nosing beyond Mach 1.0 in dives. But an aircraft's behaviour in supersonic flight was still very much a matter of conjecture.

Compressibility effects, the turbulence from the shock waves as the airflow began to change from subsonic to supersonic, causing severe vibration and buffeting of the aircraft and sometimes ineffectiveness of controls, were still a very real problem which had to be approached cautiously with a programme of gradual increases in speed.

After the straight-wing aircraft to which Beamont was accustomed, the P.86 seemed to take a much longer time to become airborne. He had left the end of the concrete runway, and was well over the salt lake beyond, before the aircraft had gained sufficient speed for him to settle down to a climb to 36,000 feet.

Powerful Efficiency

California spread out beneath him: the flatness of the Mojave Desert matching that of the Pacific Ocean which bordered the distant horizon. For a moment he gave himself up to the sheer enchantment of flying, chasing across the sky with an exultant feeling of space and freedom.

Then he was a test pilot again, feeling the controls, noting the reactions of the aircraft. The ailerons, as Welsh had said, were much more sensitive than those he was accustomed to, but apart from that the P.86 was flying easily and smoothly, a creature of powerful efficiency rather than beauty.

Gently he put the nose down, gradually increasing the angle of the dive and letting the speed build up until the needle of the Machmeter quivered on 0.95. He pulled out slowly. It had been a smooth dive with no unpleasant characteristics.

The aircraft had remained easily under control throughout and had left him with the impression of considerable reserves of speed in hand. He was confident then that he could reach the speed of sound in a dive, and that the boisterous claims of the pilots the night before were well-founded.

He looked at the fuel gauge. There was enough for one more climb and dive. It would mean foregoing any aerobatics. He made up his mind at once. This, he knew, would be his one and only flight in the P.86, and perhaps his only chance for years to

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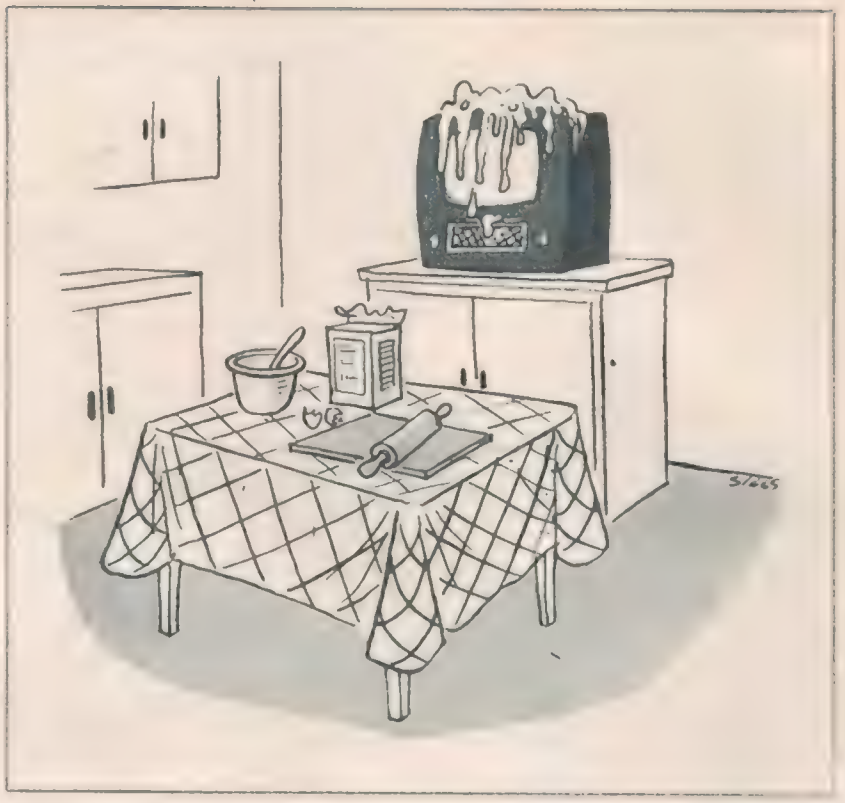

make a supersonic dive. He eased back the control column and lifted the nose of the P.86. "Test flight near limitations" would be the official phraseology of the report in his log book.

Levelling out at 35,000 feet, he opened up in a full throttle run to maximum speed and rolled into a steep dive. He trimmed the aircraft quickly. On the instrument panel the hand of the Machmeter swung forward round the dial, while the altimeter needle raced downwards through hundreds of feet.

"32,000 feet, Mach 0.9," he read. "30,000 feet, Mach 0.97."

With no means of visual comparisons, speed loses flavour at altitude. The earth is too far away to provide the customary impression of a streaming panorama and blurred landscape. But now, as the P.86 hurtled between subsonic and supersonic flight, Beamont felt speed as a combat of opposing forces.

There was an all-out straining of the thrust of the P.86 against the air which no longer had time to divide ahead but piled up like snow against a plough, into a compressed wall of rising resistance to the aircraft. Trapped in this vice, the P.86 began to buffet and shake and set his muscles quivering in unison.

A wing dropped and the control column jerked but, forewarned by Welsh, he was ready for the change in trim and with a firm movement of the controls held the P.86 in a steady line of dive. Then crouching forward, cautiously, deliberately, he relaxed his grip on the control column in order to maintain a sensitive touch.

Riding Roughly Now

Intently his eyes watched the instrument panel. The needle of the Machmeter had slowed to a quivering hesitation.

"29,500 feet, Mach 0.99," he read. "29,000 feet, Mach 0.99."

The P.86 was riding roughly now, striving to buck and veer like an unbroken filly. Mind and body tensed, he held the column steady and forced the nose down.

"28,500 feet." Through eyes that were slits he saw the Machmeter needle shake forward with an agonizing slowness. "28,000 feet." The needle was at Mach One. Quivering but definitely Mach 1.0 and showing willingness to move farther forward still. Hold her there, hold her there, be willed himself.

"27,500 feet. Mach 1.01." Hold her there, hold her. Let there be no mistake. Hold her! "Mach 1.01 . . . Mach 1.01. . . ."

Relaxed and content, Beamont came out of the dive at 20,000 feet and for the first time since take-off called North American Aviation's flight office on the radio as he had been briefed to do.

"Mach One dive completed. Very satisfactory," he reported.

The news took the controller out of his stride, and there was a perceptible pause before his voice gave the routine acknowledgment: "Roger."

"P.86 returning to base," announced Beamont.

He switched off the radio telephone, checked his fuel, and throttled back into an easy dive. By saving on the descent, he reckoned, he should have enough left to allow him one run over the measured mile above Lake Muroc. At that time the world's speed record stood at 650 m.p.h. and it was obvious to him that the P.86 could reach that.

Breathless Haste

Distance shrank and detail grew larger until he picked out Muroc salt lake, and the black, mile-long strip across the middle of the greyish whiteness.

Opening up the throttle again at 3,000 feet, he gathered speed in a diving turn that brought him levelling out with the end of the black strip darting towards him.

Now speed was a sense of breathless haste and pace, with earth blurred into a scurrying ribbon of headlong retreat. At an indicated airspeed of 650 m.p.h. he covered the measured distance, and went straight in to land with the fuel tanks almost dry.

An American colonel met him at dispersal. "You made the most of your first flight, bud," he said. "I just hate to think of the heart attacks the State Department in Washington will have when they know that a foreigner has dived the P.86 at Mach One."

"I was briefed that she had done more than Mach One in a dive," Beamont said mildly.

"Sure—and the boys were stringing you along last night about the supersonic flights the P.86 had made, I know. But gosh, they never reckoned that you would take them at their

Guess What?

THE instrument on page 35 is a pair of wine tongs used in the last century if the cork could not be drawn from a bottle. Made red hot, the tongs gripped the neck of the bottle and the action of the hot iron on the glass snapped it off cleanly.

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word. Anyway, you can probably do with some coffee after all that."

In the canteen the colonel called across to a major in the powder-blue uniform of the U.S.A.F. "Chuck, come on over a minute, will you?"

He turned to Beamont. "You know Chuck Yeager? He has been doing the supersonic schedule in the Bell X-1.

"Chuck, this is Beamont, a British pilot who's over here on a flight mission."

Major Charles Yeager was not amused. "Oh, this is the Limey they let loose with the P.86," he growled. "And I can't get a ride in it myself yet."

The colonel grinned at Beamont as Yeager stumped away, but he said with a quiet seriousness: "You know, when the authority for your flight in the P.86 was given, I am sure no one bargained for a Mach One dive. In the interests of diplomatic relations, I guess it would be as well if you kept that part of it to yourself."

Apart from his awareness of security regulations, it was not in Beamont's nature to have talked about the flight to anyone not directly concerned with it. To his embarrassment, however, the story of the flight was published three days later in the Californian newspapers.

Suspicion at once fell on him until investigation proved that an aeronautical magazine had been keeping the Muroc airfield under regular observation. The flight of the P.86 that morning had been seen, and the story pieced together by a journalist.

Wall Of Ignorance

News of what then appeared to be the first faster than sound flight by a British pilot, stayed on the other side of the Atlantic. Attempts to check on reports and rumours of the flight with both the Ministry of Supply and Beamont himself were met by a blank wall of professed ignorance.

Not until John Derry was hailed as the first British pilot to fly faster than sound did the aeronautical press repeat American reports of Beamont's flight in the P.86 and establish his claim to the distinction.

Derry's dive in the D.H.108 in September 1948, had, however, set off the hitherto unknown sonic "bang" and it was difficult to understand why this phenomenon, which became a regular accompaniment to supersonic dives in this country, had not been experienced in the United States.

Subsequent investigations proved that an instrument fault had caused an error of up to 0.03 or 0.04 in the Machmeter reading; this meant that the true speed of dives recording Mach 1.01 in the P.86 had been nearer Mach 0.98.

In the light of subsequent experience, Beamont personally grew certain that his dive in the P.86 was not quite supersonic and that John Derry was without doubt the first British pilot to exceed the speed of sound.

Back in England again, months of research work followed with a Vampire, a Meteor IV, and a Halifax to test the different types of controls, brakes and equipment proposed for the new jet bomber.

Brakes failed on touch-down and once a cockpit hood burst at 43,000 feet. Beamont's senses drained in the rush of the explosive decompression, but regaining consciousness at 38,000 feet, he recovered control for the cold, draughty return to base.

Got Off The Ground

By May, 1948, the Rolls-Royce Avon engines had been installed in the Canberra, the engine test run completed, and the programme of taxi-ing tests began at Warton. Slow taxi-ing runs at first, and then gradually the speed of the runs was increased until the Canberra was rising off the ground for short distances; Beamont, while observing minutely the functioning of all the systems and controls, was able to gain a first idea of its "feel" in flight.

Taxi-ing runs with full and reduced fuel load—the conditions at pre-flight and after landing—brought him to the stage of deliberate hops to a height of ten to fifteen feet above the runway over a quarter mile distance.

By the standards of the Wright brothers, the aircraft was flying, but straight hops are no longer officially regarded as flights. It is these hops, however, which enable the pilot to test initially in comparative safety the response and effectiveness of ailerons, elevator and rudder.

At last, on May 12, 1949, Beamont was able to write in his report: "Aircraft to be prepared for first flight condition."

Made A Final Check

The following morning was Friday the thirteenth, but Beamont gave the superstition no thought as he sat in the cockpit. The straight hops had already given him assurance that the aircraft could fly. Now it was entirely up to him to see that the product of years of hope and hard work by Petter and his design team, who stood watching anxiously on the tarmac, came to no harm.

Probably, he thought as he taxied past, the poor devils are feeling much more anxious than I am.

He lined up at the end of the runway, and did a final cockpit check. Satisfied, he called the control office.

"Tarnish One to Warton. Ready to go."

"Tarnish One. Clear to take off." The gruff voice was impersonal and without emotion. Only the silence which followed in the control room, and the unanimous straining of eyes towards the end of the runway lost in distance, betrayed the fact that this was something more than routine.

Beamont put the flaps down, opened the throttles. Power shook the aircraft as the thrust of the engines strained against the brakes. The speed of the engine revolutions reached their maximum. He let go the brakes and, in a burst of unleashed energy which pressed him hard into his seat, the Canberra surged forward, speed building up rapidly until he eased the bomber off the runway.

He felt the control column become alive under his hands like the reins of a horse fighting for its head. Though he set the trimmer for fully nose-down position, the aircraft was still trying to climb.

Aircraft Fought Him

At two hundred feet he reduced power and raised the undercarriage, which retracted satisfactorily but set the aircraft yawing slightly to port. Immediately Beamont corrected with right rudder, but after a very small reaction the rudder pedal moved slackly without effect.

"Probably over balanced," he noted and corrected with left rudder pressure to bring the aircraft into a straight climb to five thousand feet. Levelling out, he settled down to a speed of 170 knots, but still the aircraft fought him, striving to climb, and in addition to full nose-down trim he was having to exert a push force against the stick of twenty to thirty pounds to hold the shallow climb.

With the retraction of the flaps, the pressure on the stick eased, and adjusting the trim until the aircraft felt perfectly balanced, Beamont took his hands off the control column. The Canberra continued steadily in stable flight.

Beamont nodded his satisfaction, and scribbled on the pad strapped to his knee: "Trimmed hands off at 245 knots IAS [indicated air speed] tailplane two graduations up from nose down."

Against a Vampire V, flown alongside to observe the exterior behaviour of the controls, he checked the accuracy of the air speed indicator, and began a more exhaustive investigation of the rudder operation.

As he came in to land, he cut the engines five hundred yards short of the runway and held off at a hundred knots to touch down smoothly.

He had been in the air twenty-seven minutes. The Canberra had passed the first hurdle. A good flight, he told himself happily. Apart from the rudder condition, all services had operated

"Well, I *feel* different . . ."

satisfactorily and the aircraft had handled smoothly and easily.

Beamont was fortunate in having, at the start of his career as chief test pilot, a chief designer who liked to foster initiative. More often than not, a sharp line had been drawn between pilots and the scientists who have taken the attitude that the pilot is there for no other reason than to drive the machine, and that design is certainly no concern of his.

The introduction of the jet engine leading to the complexities of high-speed flight created much greater need for co-operation.

Cockpit planning and instrument layout, sensitivity and response of controls, are among the factors of aircraft design in which it is now being accepted that designers' theories can perhaps be profitably influenced by pilots' practical knowledge.

Petter was never one of those who resented opinions from the pilots. His own outlook is expressed in a letter to Beamont when he was leaving the English Electric Company some time later to concentrate upon his ideas for a light fighter.

"I have enjoyed our work together tremendously," wrote Petter. "Your job requires so much more than skilful flying. It needs courage, willingness to work, co-operation and good judgment.

"You showed what is, in my experience, an altogether exceptional combination of these and, what is more, you have not allowed success to turn your head, which, alas, spoils so many good chief test pilots. . . ."

If Petter had a reputation in some quarters of being a difficult man, it was because of his firm belief in his own ideas, which it was very hard to shake. Dive brakes, for example, were one point on which designer and pilot could not see eye to eye. Beamont, with the background of a fighter pilot, wanted them.

Petter, agreeing that they would be essential on a fighter, insisted that he was building a bomber that would not be called upon to perform the aerobatics of a fighter, and therefore had no need of dive brakes.

Later, when the Canberra was nearing completion, a senior Ministry of Supply official was shown the aircraft by Petter.

"Where are the dive brakes?" he asked.

"There are no dive brakes," Petter replied.

The visitor was surprised. "Are you sure that is wise?" he queried.

Petter looked glum. To start fitting dive brakes at that stage was going to set back the schedule considerably. He raised the subject again with Beamont, and it was finally agreed that dive brakes were not essential on the prototype but that they should be fitted to the operational machines.

Screech Of Energy

The absence of dive brakes on the prototype had a curious sequel when the Canberra was given its first public demonstration at the Farnborough flying display in September, 1949.

Half an hour before the Canberra's time on the programme, Beamont left the pilots' tent and went to his aircraft. He felt extremely confident. He had seen the bomber grow from mock-up to reality, had seen the care and the thoroughness, and the checking and rechecking by Petter and his team. He had known no other aircraft inside and out quite so well.

Beamont signalled the starter crew. The engines roared into a high pitched screech of energy. The Canberra was a pilot's aircraft, all right. It had the power, it had the capabilities. Why should it be expected to remain staid and reserved just because it had been designated bomber instead of fighter?

He would show the crowd that in manoeuvrability and aerobatics the Canberra could more than hold its own with any fighter of the day.

He had rehearsed his programme carefully. A take-off into a near vertical climb, a grass-cutting high-speed run down the runway and a roll off a loop in either direction: an

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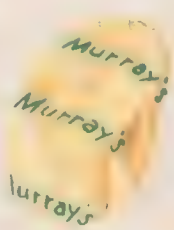

It's The Custom . . . in GROVE

The race is on. Excited spectators sometimes join in fully clothed

Rivals scuffle for the elusive duck

In 1947, Albert Cook, of Grove in Berkshire, dammed the village brook as usual for the duck races at Grove's annual fair—and forgot to keep an eye on it. During the afternoon the brook overflowed its banks and flooded the village green and the whole fair.

"Something out of the way happens every year," says Cook, who was born in the village fifty-one years ago. "When 'Sooty' Matthews, then village chimney sweep, was taking part in the races a few years back, he lost his false teeth during a scuffle for a duck, and couldn't find them till the water had cleared the next morning."

Duck races have been held at Grove for at least two hundred years. They wind up the village's annual feast celebrations which begin on the first Sunday after July 6. At eight in the evening of the following Saturday, the duck race rivals line up on the three-arched road bridge, about four feet above the water of the brook. A duck is released in the brook about halfway between this bridge and another bridge on the far side of the green.

When the duck has settled, the starter blows his whistle and the villagers leap into the water. The first man to catch the duck wins the race, and keeps the bird as his prize.

There are usually six races, including one for children. The brook, which has a stony bed, rises when dammed from its normal depth of one foot to about two feet six inches.

"Duck racing isn't as easy as it sounds," says Albert Cook, who one year won five out of six races. "I've seen a dozen men take twenty minutes to catch a duck."

The most elusive ducks are White Runners, which can stay under water for long periods. "One year a man had one of these ducks almost within his grasp when it submerged, swam between his legs and came up some time later fifty yards away behind the whole field," says Cyril Wickham, the clerk to the parish council.

Sometimes the spectators at the duck races get so carried away that they join in fully dressed. Once a Canadian airman lost his shoes. Three years ago, another airman jumped into the brook, and had to go nine miles to his camp at Lambourn, soaked to the skin.

approach at nearly six hundred miles an hour, slowing down quickly to a bare hundred for some tight, slow turns, and then with full flap and wheels down, a violent rocking by the ailerons to show the control available, approaching stalling speed.

Beamont taxied to the end of the runway. The aircraft preceding him in the display was still running along when Farnborough control called up: "Canberra, clear to take off."

The crowd waited without undue excitement. The Canberra was new, it was Britain's first jet bomber and this was its first public demonstration. But to many its lines looked too conventional to attract interest. In the eye of the public, excited at a future of sweep-back and delta and other revolutionary designs, straight wing, twin engine bombers seemed already to belong to the past.

Beamont let go the brakes. The Canberra lifted as it ran free from restraint, building up speed. Beamont had covered only one third of the runway when, using the president's tent as a marker, he pulled back the control column and lifted the aircraft off the ground.

For a moment the Canberra appeared to be standing on its jet thrust and then it was gone, rocketing into an almost vertical climb that drew with it the necks of the crowd and banished whatever lack of interest there might have been. Now they were craning forward, searching the sky, excitedly waiting for the next run of the aircraft whose more or less orthodox lines had taken them unawares.

At 2,000 feet Beamont half rolled out of the climb into a diving turn back for Farnborough.

From three miles out, he put the nose down and the grey ribbon of runway and the tents and the crowd streamed in a blur towards him and then spun away as he lifted the wing into a roll.

Again he thundered towards the runway and abruptly throttled back, applying full flap and opening the bomb doors as a makeshift for dive brakes. The roar of the jet subsided in a howl of slipstream as the speed dropped suddenly from more than five hundred to less than 150 miles an hour.

Like a runner pulled up by an invisible finishing tape, the Canberra seemed to stop dead in mid-air; and almost as quickly the excited admiration of the crowd gave place to a numbing horror as they saw three or four fragments come away from the aircraft and fall to earth.

In the cockpit Beamont felt a sharp change in trim. "What was that?" he exclaimed aloud.

"Might have been one of the bomb doors," suggested his flight observer David Walker.

Beamont checked quickly with the control column. The aircraft was still flying smoothly and he was reassuring himself that the trim change was caused by the opening of the bomb doors, when the Farnborough controller called him on the radio telephone: "Canberra, you are dropping pieces."

"Roger; coming in for immediate landing."

Instinctively he banked in a tight turn away from the crowd and the buildings of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, towards the open fields at the far end of the runway. Even as he did so he caught a glimpse of a scarlet fire tender and white ambulance drawing out in front of the control tower to wait with engines running on the perimeter.

Walker drew his attention to the engine instrument panel. The starboard engine instruments were reading zero. Evidently it was an engine that had gone.

He throttled back into a steep, gliding turn that would place the aircraft on the final approach. Above all, he told himself, he had to make his return appear normal to the crowd below.

No Time For Checking

On the radio, Farnborough control was calling to a Comet to get off the runway, and a moment later he saw the airliner move forward and rise into the air. Good, he thought, exactly as scheduled. One takes off as the other comes in to land.

Cautiously Beamont brought the Canberra into line with the end of the runway. Only that first change of trim suggested any disability; but control had seen something go, and there was no time for further checking.

Alert for the unexpected, he held off over the aerodrome boundary and then gradually eased the Canberra down until the wheels were gently running along the runway.

Once securely down he opened the starboard throttle. The burst of power as he taxied off the runway reassured him that obviously the starboard engine was functioning even though the instruments were not. But already he was facing a new worry. Would there be time to have the damage—whatever it was—put right and the Canberra made serviceable for the next day's display?

He pulled up on the perimeter, and Walker dropped to the ground to investigate. He returned with his face in smiles.

"It's O.K., Bee," he reported. "It's only the auto-observer."

Ripped from its mountings when the bomb doors were opened, the auto-observer had cut the electric wiring, and put out of action the engine revolution indicator on the instrument panel.

No other harm had been done, and with the ground crew working all night to prevent a recurrence of the incident, Beamont was putting the Canberra through her paces the following day.

Highlights At Home

"Never," wrote the aeronautical magazine *Flight*, "had a new aircraft been so convincingly demonstrated." For once the triumphant dexterity with which the bomber was flown stole the glamour of the fighters at the Society of British Aircraft Constructors' Show.

In the months that followed, the Canberra's manoeuvrability and the ease and artistry with which it was handled, provided the highlights in a succession of air displays both at home and overseas.

They were to set the scene for a dramatic and record-breaking flight across the Atlantic and back that was to win for Beamont and the Canberra the admiration of the Queen.

NEXT WEEK: Beamont's desperate race with time

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...when you know the secret!'

It was after my talk on salads to a West Country Women's Institute that one housewife in the audience stood up and asked me if I could show her how to get more variety into her salads. That started it! Everyone seemed to be worried by this same question. But as I told them "salads can be deliciously *different* — when you know the secret ..."

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and here's a useful household hint
Keep your hands soft and white by washing them in equal parts of Sarson's Virgin Vinegar and water. This should be done after washing up, etc.

THREE SARSON'S SALAD SECRETS:

1. Here's an exciting salad dressing made in the French style :—

½ tsp. salt; ¼ tsp. pepper; ½ tsp. mustard; pinch of sugar; 1 tbsp. Sarson's Virgin Vinegar; 1 tbsp. olive or salad oil.

Mix salt, pepper, mustard, sugar, vinegar; beat in oil with fork; use as soon as mixture is blended.

2. This is how to use up left-over boiled potatoes — mix diced potato with salad dressing (see above). It's delicious!

3. Hard-boil an egg (preferably new-laid) and prevent shell cracking by adding a tsp. of Sarson's Virgin Vinegar to the water. Peel, slice and use as salad garnish.

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IT HITS MOST OF US at times. We wake up in the morning feeling tired, sour, and headachy. That's Exhaustipation — the tiredness caused by constipation!

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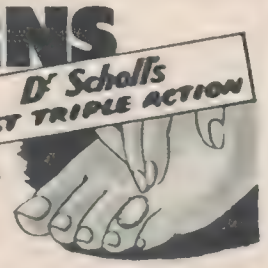

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Dr Scholl's Zino-pads

THE SEARCHERS

Continued from page 13

into the saddle with the "Amen," and led off without a word. With Martin and Amos went Brad Mathison, Ed Newby, Charlie MacCorry, Mose Harper and his son Zack, and Lije Powers.

At the last moment Laurie Mathison ran to Martin where he sat already mounted. She stepped up lightly upon the toe of his stirruped boot, and kissed him hard and quickly on the mouth. He was startled, but only for a second. He seemed already to have forgotten her, as he turned his horse.

SEVEN men were still with the pursuit as they approached the Cat-tail Marsh at sundown of their fifth day. Old Lije Powers had dropped out on the occasion of his thirty-ninth or fortieth argument over the interpretation of sign.

At the start Amos had led them at a horse-killing pace, a full twenty hours of their first twenty-four. That was because of the girls, of course. Often Comanches cared for and raised captive white children, marrying the girls when they were grown, and taking the boys into their families as brothers. So the pursuers spent themselves and their horseflesh unsparingly in that first run; yet found no sign, as their ponies failed, that they had gained ground upon the fast-travelling Comanches.

Amos rode relaxed now, wasting no motions and no steps. He had the look of a man resigned to follow this trail down the years, as long as he should live.

Martin was aware that a change had come over Amos suddenly on the night of the disaster; and another who was showing change was Brad Mathison. He was always the one ranging farthest ahead, the first to start out each morning, the most reluctant to call it a day as the sun went down. He was turning hollow-eyed and losing weight. During the past year Brad had taken to coming over to the Edwardses to see Lucy. Martin didn't believe there had been any overpowering attachment there. But now that Lucy was lost, Brad was becoming more involved with every day that diminished hope.

By the third day some of them must have believed Lucy to be dead; but Brad could not let himself think that. "She's alive," he told Martin. "She's got to be alive, Mart." And on the fourth day, dropping back to ride beside Mart, "I'll make it up to her, no matter what's happened to her, no matter what she's gone through. I'll make her forget."

It was Brad again who first sighted the Comanches. Far out in front he brought his horse to the edge of a rimrock cliff; then dropped from the saddle and led his horse back from the edge. And now once more he held his rifle over his head with both hands, signalling "found."

The cliff was a three hundred foot limestone wall, dropping off sheer, as if it might be the shoreline of a vanished sea. Twenty miles off, out in the middle of the flats, lay a patch of haze, shimmering redly in the horizontal light of the sunset. The Cat-tail Marsh. A black line, wavering in the ground heat, showed in front of the marsh haze.

"Horses," Brad said. "There's sure a power of them there."

They were silent awhile, studying the distant pen scratch upon the world that must be a band of livestock. The light was failing now as the sunset faded.

"We better feed out," Amos said finally. "It'll be dark in an hour and a half. No reason we can't jump them long before daylight, with any kind of start."

Ed Newby said, "You right sure you want to jump all them?"

Charlie MacCorry turned to look Ed over. "Just what in hell you think we come here for?"

"They'll be took unawares," Amos said. "They're always took unawares. Ain't an Indian in the world knows how to keep sentries out once the night goes cold."

"It ain't that," Ed answered. "We can whup them all right, I guess. Only thing . . . Comanches are mighty likely to kill any prisoners they've got, if they're jumped hard enough. They've done it again and again."

Amos said, "There's another way. Might be we could set the Comanche afoot. Stampede them ponies, and run off the whole bunch. I don't believe it would make 'em murder anybody that's still alive."

"This thing ain't going to be too easy," Ed Newby said.

"No," Amos agreed. "It ain't easy. And it ain't safe, but if we did get it done, the Comanche should be ready to deal."

Charlie MacCorry said: "You know, could be every last one of them bucks has his best pony on short lead. Right beside him where he lies."

"That's right," Amos said. "That might very well be. And you know what happens then?"

"We lose our hair. And no good done to nobody."

Brad Mathison said: "In God's name, will you try it, Mr. Edwards?"

"I will," Amos said.

Amos spoke almost with relish and Mart was again struck with the change that had come over him since the night of the massacre. And thinking of it, and of the look there had been on his face when they had found Martha dead, the reason for that change suddenly became plain.

Mart had lived with Amos most of his life without ever suspecting the truth. But neither had Henry suspected it—and Martha least of all.

Amos was—had always been—in love with his brother's wife.

Amos held them where they were for an hour after dark. All of them studied the shape of the hills a hundred miles beyond, taking a line on the Comanche camp. That fly speck, so far out upon the plain, would be easy to miss in the dark. When the marsh could no longer be seen they used the hill contours to take sights upon the stars they knew, as each appeared. By the time the hills, too, were swallowed by the night, each had a star bearing by which he could find his way.

Amos was still in no hurry as he led off, sliding down the cleft by which the Comanches had descended to the plain. Once down on the flats, Amos held to an easy walk. He wanted to strike the Comanche horse herd before daylight, but when he had attacked he wanted dawn to come soon, so they could tell how they had come out, and make a finish. There must be no long muddle in the dark.

THE moon rose, very meagre, very late. About midnight the coyotes began their clamour, surprisingly near, but not in the key that bothered Mart; and a little later the hoarser, deeper howling of a loafer wolf sounded for a while a great way off. Brad Mathison drifted his pony alongside Mart's.

"That thing sound all right to you?"

Mart was uncertain. One note had sounded a little queer to him at one point, but it did not come again. He said he guessed it sounded like a wolf.

"Seems kind of far from timber for a loafer wolf. This time of year, anyway," Brad worried.

After the loafer wolf shut up, a dwarf owl began to give out with a whickering noise about a middle distance off. Half a furlong farther on another took it up, and later another as they came abreast. This went on for half an hour, and it had a spooky feel to it because the owls always sounded one at a time, and always nearby. When Mart couldn't stand it any more he rode up beside Amos.

"What you think?" he asked, as an owl sounded again.

Amos shrugged. "Hard to say."

"You mean you don't know if that's a real owl?"

"It's a real something. A noise don't make itself."

"I know, but that there is an easy noise to make. You could make it, or——"

"Well, I ain't."

"——or I could make it. Might be anything."

"Yeah, I know. . . . Tell you what I'll do. I'll make 'em stop, being's

they bother you." Amos pushed his lips out and sounded an owl cry—not the cry of just any owl, but an exact repeat of the one they had just heard.

No more owls whickered that night. . . .

MART believed dawn could be no more than an hour off when Brad came up to whisper to him again. "I think we gone past."

Mart searched the east, fearing to see a greying in the sky too soon. But the night was still very dark, in spite of the dying moon. He could feel a faint warm breath of air upon his left cheek. "Wind's shifted to the south," he answered. "I think Amos changed his line. Wants to come at 'em up wind."

"I know. I see that. But I think——"

Amos had stopped, and was holding up his hand. The six others closed up on him, stopped their horses and sat silent in their saddles. Mart couldn't hear anything except the loose animals behind, tearing at the grass. Amos rode on, and they travelled another fifteen minutes before he stopped again.

This time, when the shuffle of their ponies' feet had died, a faint sound lay upon the night. What they were hearing was the trilling of frogs in the marsh.

Amos spoke softly. "Spread out some. Keep in line, and guide on me. I'll circle close in as I dare."

They spread out until they could just barely see each other, and rode at a walk, abreast of Amos as he moved on. The frog song came closer. The north star was on their right hand for a while. Then it was behind them a long time. Then on their left, then ahead. At last it was on their right again, and Amos stopped.

"Catch up the loose stock," he said. "I want hobbles on 'em all—and soon!"

Mart was buckling a hobble on a pack mule when Brad dropped on one knee beside him.

"Look out yonder," Brad whispered, "when you get a chance. I swear something showed itself. Then look down again."

"A wolf, maybe?" Mart whispered, staring ahead.

"I don't know."

Now followed an odd aimless period, while they waited, and the light imperceptibly increased.

"They're out there," Amos said at last. "I reckon they been watching us all night. They're going to jump us. There's no doubt of it now."

Nobody denied it, or made any comment. The others stood about in loose meaningless positions, not huddled, not restless, but motionless, and very watchful. When they spoke they held their voices low.

Then Amos's rifle split the silence down the middle, and the rest saw what Amos had shot at. A single file of ten Comanches on wiry buffalo ponies had come into view at a thousand yards, materializing out of the seemingly flat earth.

They came on at a light trot, ignoring Amos's shot. Zack Harper and Brad Mathison fired, but weren't good enough either at the range.

"Throw them horses down!" Amos shouted. "Git your backs to the marsh and tie down!" He snubbed his pony's muzzle back close to the horn, picked up the off fetlock, and threw the horse heavily.

Some of the others were doing the same thing, but Brad was in a fight with his hotblood animal. It reared eleven feet tall, striking with fore hoofs, trying to break away. "Kill that horse!" Amos yelled. Obediently, Brad drew his six-gun, put a bullet into the animal's head under the ear, and stepped from under as it came down.

Ed Newby still stood, his rifle resting ready to fire across the saddle of his standing horse. Mart lost his head enough to yell: "Can't you throw him? Shall I shoot him, Ed?"

"Leave be! Let the Comanch' put him down."

BY now, three more of the Comanche single-file columns were in sight, widely spread, trotting well in hand. They had a ghostly look at first, of the same colour as the prairie, in the grey light. Almost half of them had rifles. Some trader, standing on his right to make a living, must have taken a handsome profit putting those in Comanche hands.

Amos's rifle banged again. One of the lead ponies swerved and ran wild as the rider rolled off into the grass. Immediately, the Comanches leaned low on their ponies and came on at a hard run.

At three hundred yards the four Comanche columns cut hard left, coming into a single loose line that streamed across the front of the defence. The cowmen were as ready as they were going to be; they had got themselves into a ragged semi-circle behind their tied-down horses, their backs to the water.

"I count thirty-seven," Ed Newby said. He was still on his feet behind his standing horse.

They could see the Comanche war paint now as the warriors rode in plain

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LINOLEUM

31

sight across their front. Faces and naked bodies were striped and splotched in combinations of white, red, and yellow; with heavy accents of black, the Comanche colour for war, for battle, and for death.

Besides paint, the Comanches wore breech clouts and moccasins; and a few had horn or bear-claw head-dresses. The ponies had their tails tied up, and were ridden bareback, guided by a single jaw rein.

The Comanche leader turned again and circled in. He brought his warriors past the defenders within fifty yards, ponies loosely spaced, racing full out.

SUDDENLY, from every Comanche throat burst the screaming war cry; and Mart was paralysed by the impact of that sound, stunned and sickened as by a blow in the belly with a rock. The war cries rose in a high unearthly yammering, wailing and snarling, piercing to his backbone to cut off every nerve he had. The muscles of his shoulders clenched as if turned to stone, and his hands so trembled upon his rifle that it rattled, useless, against the saddle upon which it rested.

Amos spoke into his ear. "Leave your shoulders go loose. Make your shoulders slack, and your hands will take care of theirselves. Now help me git a couple!"

All the rifles were sounding now from behind the tied-down horses. Mart breathed again, picked a target, and took aim. One Comanche after another was dropping from sight behind his pony as he came opposite the waiting rifles; they went down in order, shamming a slaughter that wasn't happening. Each Comanche hung by one heel and a loop of mane on the far side of his pony and fired under the neck, offering only one arm and part of a painted face for target.

The circling Comanches kept up a continuous firing, each warrior reloading as he swung away, then coming past to fire again. This was the famous Comanche wheel, moving closer with every turn, chewing into the defence like a racing grindstone, yet never committing its force beyond possibility of a quick withdrawal. Bullets buzzed over, or howled in ricochet from dust-spouts short of the defenders. A lot of whistling noises were arrows going over. Zack Harper's horse was hit.

Fifty yards out in front of him Mart Pauley saw a rifle snake across the quarters of a fallen pony. A horn head-dress rose cautiously, and the rifle swung to look Mart square in the eye. He took a snap shot, aiming between the horns, which disappeared, and the enemy rifle slid unfired into the short grass.

After that there was a let-up, while the Comanches broke circle and drew off. Out in front of the cowmen lay three downed ponies, two dead Comanches, and two live ones, safe and dangerous behind their fallen horses. Amos was swearing softly and steadily to himself.

Mose Harper scratched his beard. "You glued to the ground, Zack?" he asked. "Take care that horse!"

Zack got up and took a look at his wounded horse, but he didn't seem to know what to do. He stood staring at it, until his father walked across and shot it.

The Indians came on again, and this time they swept past at no more than ten yards. They made this run in close bunches; the attack became a smother of confusion. Both lead and arrows poured fast into the cowmen's position.

Zack whimpered, "My God—there's a million of 'em!" and ducked down behind his dead horse.

"Git your damned head up!" Mose yelled at his son. "Fire into 'em!" Zack raised up and went to fighting again.

Sometime during this run Ed Newby's horse fell, pinning Ed under it, but they had no time to go to him while this burst of the attack continued. At last the Comanches pulled off again.

The cowmen got their backs into the job of getting nine hundred pounds of horse off Ed Newby. Mose Harper said, "How come you let him catch you, Ed?"

Ed Newby answered through set teeth. "They got my leg—just as he come down——"

Ed's leg was not only bullet-broken, but had doubled under him, and got smashed again by the killed horse. Amos put the shaft of an arrow between Ed's teeth, and the arrow-wood splintered as two men put their weight into pulling the leg straight.

Apart from a fast sweep to pick up their dead or dismounted, the Comanche did not attack again.

The cowmen prepared to remount.

"Somebody's got to stay with Ed," Mose said. "I suppose I'm the one to do that—old crip that I be. But some of them Comanch' might circle back. You'll have to leave Zack with me. And I need one fast man on a good horse to get me help. Charlie MacCorry. Will you do it, Charlie?"

So three rode on, Amos, Mart and Brad, following a plume of dust already distant upon the prairie. "We'll have the answer soon," Amos promised. "Soon. We don't dast let 'em lose us now."

Mart Pauley was silent. He didn't want to ask him what three riders could do when they caught up with the Comanches. He was afraid Amos didn't know.

They kept the feather of dust in sight all day, but in the morning they failed to pick it up. The trail of the Comanche war party still led westward, broad and plain, marked at intervals with the carcasses of buffalo ponies wounded at the Cat-tails. They pushed on, getting all they could out of their horses.

As they rode, a line of low hills, many hours away beyond the plain, began to shove up from the horizon. After a while they knew the Comanches were already into that broken country where pursuit would be slower and more treacherous than before.

"Do we have any chance at all?" Mart asked Amos.

"Yes. . . . We got a chance. An Indian will chase a thing until he thinks he's chased it enough. Then he quits. The same when he runs. After a while he figures we must have quit, and he starts to loaf. Seemingly he never learns there's such a thing as a critter that just keeps coming on."

As he looked at Amos, sitting his saddle like a great lump of rock, Mart Pauley was willing to believe that to have Amos following you could be a deadly thing with no end to it, ever, until he was dead.

"If only they stay bunched," Amos finished, "we'll come up to 'em. We're bound to come up."

They stopped at a post-hole well to rest and water the horses. Then, some hours beyond, they came to a vast sheet of rock, as flat and naked as it had been laid down when the world was made. Here the trail ended, for unshod hoofs left no mark on the barren stone. All they could do was split up and circle the whole ledge to find where the trail came off the rock.

Mart Pauley, whose horse seemed the worse beat out, was sent straight across. On the far side he was to wait until one of the others came around to him; then both were to ride to meet the third.

Thus they separated. It was while they were apart, each rider alone with his tiring horse, that some strange thing happened to Amos, so that he became a mystery in himself throughout their last twenty-four hours together.

BRAD MATHISON was first to get around the rock sheet to where Mart Pauley was grazing his horse. They rode south a long way before they sighted Amos, waiting for them far out on the plain.

"Hasn't made much distance, has he?" Brad commented.

Amos pointed to a far-off landmark as they came up. "The trail cuts around that hump," he said, and led the way. The trail was where Amos had said it would be, a great welter of horse prints already blurred by the wind. But no other horse had been along here since the Comanches passed long before.

"Kind of thought to see your tracks here," Brad said.

"Didn't come this far."

Then where the hell had he been?

"You lost a bed blanket," Mart noticed.

"Slipped out of the string somewhere." Amos was speaking too carefully.

"You feel all right?" said Mart.

"Sure. I feel fine." Amos forced a smile, and this was a mistake, for he didn't look to be smiling. He looked as if he had been kicked in the face.

"You sure you feel——?" Mart asked again.

Amos blew up, and yelled at him. "I'm all right, I tell you!" He spurred his horse, and loped out ahead.

They off-saddled in the shelter of the hump. Brad walked across to Amos. He spoke reasonably.

"Looks like you ought to tell us, Mr. Edwards," he said. "Something happened while you was gone from us today. Be you hiding an arrow hole from us by any chance?"

"No," Amos said. "There wasn't nothing like that."

He didn't say anything else then, but later, when the three of them were bedded down, he began to talk, softly, almost to himself.

"A man has to learn to forgive himself," he said, "or he can't stand to live. It so happens we be Texans. We took a reachin' holt, way far out, past where any man has right or reason to hold on. Or if we didn't, our folks did, so we can't leave off,-without giving out that they were fools, wasting their lives, and wasted in the way they died."

There was a good deal more to it. Brad Mathison got up, and beckoned Mart with his head. Mart rolled out of his bed and walked out a way with Brad on the dark prairie.

"Mart," Brad said when they were out of hearing, "the old coot is gone crazy."

"Sure sounds so. What in all hell you think happened?"

"God knows, but this puts it up to you and me," Brad said. "You see that, don't you? We may be closer the end than you think."

"What you want to do?"

"My horse is standing up best. Tomorrow I'll start before light, and scout on out far as I can reach. You come on as you can."

"All right." Mart judged that tomorrow was going to be a hard day to live far behind on a failing pony. Like Brad, he had a feeling they were a whole lot closer to the Comanches than they had any real reason to believe.

By daylight Brad Mathison was an hour gone. Mart hadn't known how Amos would take it, but there was no fuss at all. They rode on in silence. All day long the big tracks of Brad Mathison's horse led on, on top of

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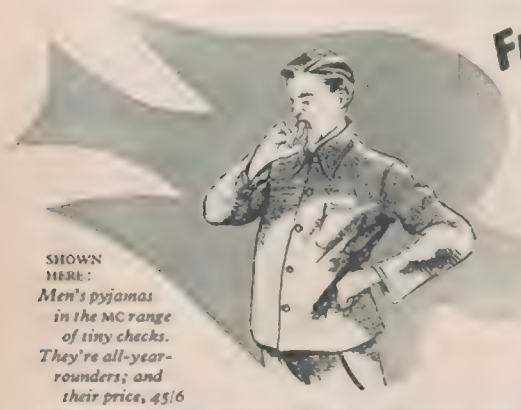

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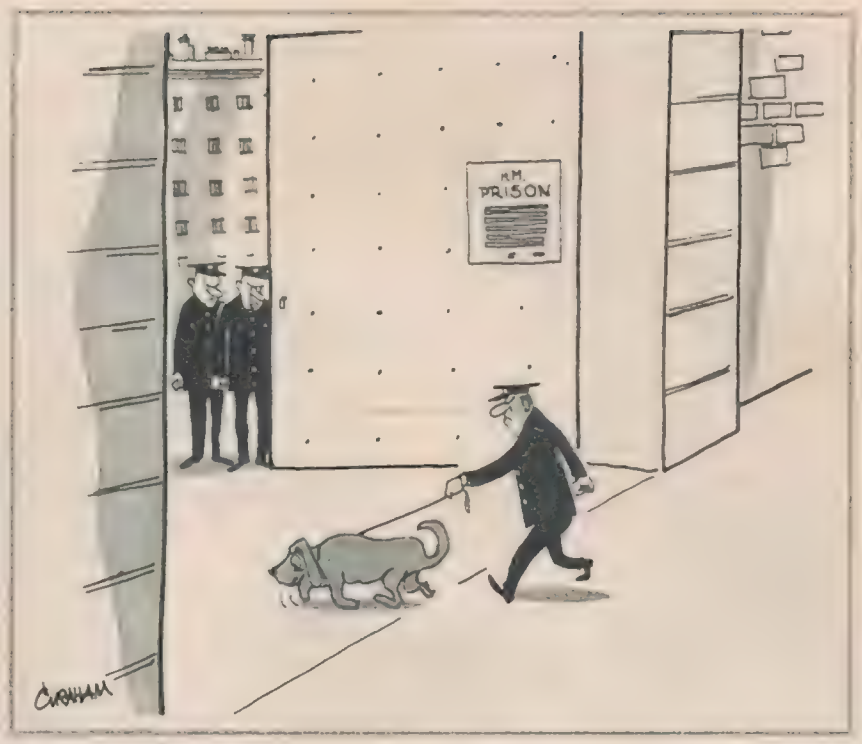

the many-horse trample left by the Comanche herd.

The sun was setting when they saw Brad again.

He came pouring off a long hill at four miles, raising a reckless dust. "I saw her!" he yelled, and hauled up sliding. "I saw Lucy!"

"How far?"

"They're camped by a running crick —they got fires going—look, you can see the smoke!" A thin haze lay flat in the quiet air above the next line of hills.

"Ought to be the Warrior River," Amos said. "Water in it, huh?"

"Didn't you hear what I said?" Brad shouted. "I tell you I saw Lucy —I saw her walking through the camp——"

Amos's tone was bleak. "How far off was you?"

"Not over seventy rod."

"Did you see Debbie?" Mart got in.

"No, but they got a bunch of baggage; she might be asleep among that. I counted fifty-one Comanch'—what you unsaddling for?"

"Good a place as any," Amos said. "Can't risk no more dust like you just now kicked up. Come dark we'll work south, and water a few miles below. We can take our time."

"*Time?*"

"They're making it easy for us. Must think they turned us back at the Cattails, and don't have to split up. All we got to do is foller to their village——"

"Village? You gone out of your mind?"

"Let 'em get back to their old chiefs and their squaws. The old chiefs have gone cagey; a village of families can't run like a war party can."

"Look—look——" Brad hunted desperately for words that would fetch Amos back to reality. "Lucy's there! I saw her—can't you hear? We got to get her out of there!"

"Brad," Amos said. "I want to know what you saw in that camp you thought was Lucy."

"I keep telling you I saw her walk——"

"I heard you!" Amos's voice rose and crackled this time. "*What* did you see walk? Could you see her yellow hair?"

"She had a shawl on her head. But——"

"She ain't there, Brad."

"God damn it, I tell you, I'd know her out of a million——"

"You saw a buck in a woman's dress," Amos said. "They're game to put anything on 'em. You know that."

Brad's sun-punished blue eyes blazed up, and his tone went soft again. "Thee lie," he said. "I've told thee afore——"

"But there's something I ain't told you," Amos said. "I found Lucy yesterday. I buried her in my own saddle blanket. With my own two hands, by the rock. I thought best to keep it from you long's I could."

The blood drained from Brad's face, and at first he could not speak. Then he stammered, "Did they — was she——?"

"Shut up!" Amos yelled at him. "Never ask me what more I seen!"

Brad stood as if knocked out for half a minute more; then he turned to his horse, stiffly, as if he didn't trust his legs too well, and he tightened his cinch.

Amos said, "Get hold of yourself! Grab him, Mart!"

Brad stepped into the saddle, and the gravel jumped from the hoofs of his horse. He levelled out down the Comanche trail again, running his horse as if he would never need it again.

"Go after him! You can handle him better than me."

Mart Pauley had pulled his saddle, vaulted bareback on to the sweaty withers, and in ten jumps opened up all the speed his beat-out horse had left. He was three furlongs back as Brad sifted into the low hills.

Up the slopes Mart followed, around a knob, and on to the down slope, spurring his wheezing horse at every jump. From here he could see the last little ridge with the smoke of Comanche campfires plain above it.

NEAR the mouth of the ravine he found Brad's horse tied to a pin-oak scrub. Far up the last ridge he saw Brad climbing strongly. Mart charged up the ridge, his horse labouring gamely as it fought the slope. Brad stopped just short of the crest, and was already on his belly at the crest as Mart dropped from his horse and scrambled on all fours to his side.

"God damn it, Brad, what you doing?"

"Get the hell out of here. You ain't wanted."

Down below, at perhaps four hundred yards, half a hundred Comanches were idling about their business. They had some piled mule packs, a lot of small fires in shallow fire holes, and parts of at least a dozen buffalo down there.

Mart couldn't see any sign of Debbie. And now he heard Brad chamber a cartridge

"You'll get Debbie killed, you fool!"

"Get out of here, I said!" Brad had his cheek on the stock; he was aiming into the Comanche camp. He took a deep breath, let it all out, and lay inert, waiting for his head to steady for the squeeze. Mart grabbed the rifle, and wrenched it out of line.

To be continued next week

"The Searchers" by Alan Le May will be published by William Collins on August 8, at 12s. 6d.

LORD OF THE DEEP

Continued from page 19

his schnorkel tube showed above the water.

I pulled ahead of him and guided them along the reef, keeping them well clear of the treacherous cavities in the coral teeth, where one can so easily be sucked and buffeted by the tide, swimming with a ceaseless searching movement of the head. Attack could come instantaneously from anywhere and in silence. These were dangerous waters. I felt naked without my gun.

As the sun rose, it searchlighted the undersea, firing it to turquoise. The fishes flushed into full brilliance. The coral dawned purple and ochre and mauve. Probing down through the outcrops, gliding like shadows across the glittering treasures of dead oyster beds, we followed the reef, watching shark shapes in the sunlight.

Crazy, I thought, the pressure creaking in my sinus like the splitting of Arctic ice. We were crazy to bring the girl. What kind of madness possessed me to take on this thing? The madness of air and voices and of hard-sounding paper in a world that was no longer real. I grasped the water in soft, silent handfuls and flew, cursing myself, through the coral branches.

A CLOUD of tiny chaetodons started up out of the trees, confusing me with their colours. There was a sudden grating sound in the water. The gun! I swept them away with my hand in time to see a big thirty-pound barracuda rocket upward like a pheasant from the coral, a bright arc of steel snaking out behind it. The arc tautened. I saw Ritter springing towards it, winding in the line. The barracuda hauled off, drawing him after it, and they veered away, twisting and struggling among the coral.

We went after them and watched. Ritter had a lot of style. He was fast and clean and every movement he made was upwards so that he had the barracuda at the surface inside of five minutes, with a short enough line to grab the harpoon.

The long, carnivorous fish had a lot more fight in him yet, but Ritter didn't use the bayonet; just to show us, I suppose. Holding the fish with the harpoon right against the surface where he had no leverage, Ritter wrestled him back to the boat.

A final tremendous thrust and the silvery, cylindrical body was humping under the thwarts, with the Sinhalese giggling and holding his feet out of the way.

Ritter ripped out his schnorkel and gasped for breath. His face was the colour of a tomato. His big muscles were up under his tan. There was a wild flare of triumph in his eyes as he looked at his wife. She remained expressionless in her mask.

The three of us scrambled into the dinghy.

"How was it?" I said.

"Terrific!" Ritter panted. "Absolutely terrific!"

He knelt on the fish while I withdrew the harpoon.

"It was a good shot," I said.

"It was a terrific shot! Right on the edge of fifteen feet I gave it about a yard elevation. Boy, he could fight, though!"

"Imagine fifty times that weight and a hundred times that strength and you have one ten-foot shark," I said.

Ritter stared at me. Then he laughed. "Are you still trying to put me off? Why don't you go home?"

I shrugged. If that was the way he felt, let's go. I told the man to row us up to the west end of the reef.

"This time you'll have to stay in the boat," I told Mrs. Ritter. "Anything's liable to happen up there. There's a break in the reef where killer fish come through to raid the feeding grounds inside. We could run into anything, swordfish, shark; sometimes you even get sea crocodiles there from the river mouth."

"No, I'm coming down," she said. "I can look after myself. If things get too hot, I'll beat it."

"If things get too hot, it'll be too late to beat it. We may have to lie up in the coral from time to time. Anyone busting up to the surface at the wrong time could be dangerous."

"Gardener's right," Ritter said. "Stay in the boat."

We had reached the spot.

The woman gazed at him. I saw she was trembling. "Duke, must you?"

Ritter heaved himself to his feet. The college-boy jaw was out. "You bought me," he said. "Try and stop me!" Clamping the schnorkel between his teeth, he moved to the side of the boat.

She caught at his arm. "I don't want you to do it, Duke," she cried. "I'm scared. This thing's too dangerous. I won't let you go through with it!"

He pushed himself free of her, and dived in.

"Stop him!" the woman begged me.

"Sorry," I said. "I'd need an army."

I followed him down under the tide, and down through the changing greens and blues. He would have to find his own solution, I thought. I had no right to interfere.

The corals were superb. Brain-coral boulders piled in blood about mason-worm buttresses, interchoked with sponges and lime flowers. Outcrops towered, fluorescent cup upon cup, to mushroom like sustained atomic blooms under the luminous tide.

Presently we came to the break in the reef. It was like a great, festooned gateway with beyond it the darkness of the Indian Ocean.

A pulse of excitement began to beat in me somewhere. Through this gateway, as I had told the girl, could come anything, anything at all. I wished Ritter hadn't got my gun.

Just inside the gateway was a slowly writhing forest of twenty-foot ribbon weed. We worked through it slowly, hoping to surprise a grouper or a giant jewfish, all the time keeping one eye on the gap in the reef.

TEN minutes passed. We had had no luck and were just settling down to watch the gateway, when I suddenly noticed a big cloud of dust drifting up behind us. We went back to investigate.

The dust was rising from a narrow clearing. At the far end of the clearing, struggling and twisting and kicking up the sand, was a human figure.

It was Mrs. Ritter! She was wearing the aqualung, so we shouldn't see her surfacing. She must have followed us from the boat.

Cursing, we beat across to her quickly. Her foot to above the ankle was trapped inside the puckered, bluish jaws of a two-foot clam.

She saw us and stopped struggling, half-lying, half-floating, waiting for us to release her. I signalled to Ritter and we surfaced.

"Damn her!" Ritter said.

"How much air is there in those canisters?"

"They've been used. Less than ten minutes."

"Got to hurry. Clams can't be

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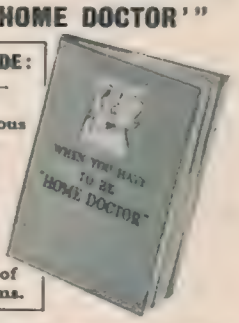

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forced. They're like steel traps. We'll have to kill the animal inside."

"How?"

"Spears."

We dived and started working on the clam with the two guns—Mrs. Ritter had been carrying one—ramming the harpoons inside the shell, jabbing and stirring. I felt the flesh recoil.

While we were working I kept watching the gateway. It was as well I did or I wouldn't have noticed the three brightly striped fish which presently nosed into the lagoon. I got Ritter up to the surface quick.

"Those are pilotfish," I said. "That means there's something big about, probably very big. You get your wife free: I'll stand guard with the gun."

"Oh, no you don't!" Ritter said. "This is what I came for, remember?" He started to dive.

I grabbed hold of the gun, checking him. "Don't be a fool! Be reasonable. I'm used to handling big fish. Your wife's life is at stake." I tried to twist the projector out of his hand.

"You think I can't protect her?"

"Sure—but——"

"Then let go!" His fist came up out of the water and hit me on the jaw. The blow jerked me backwards. I lost hold of the gun and he was gone.

I breathed deeply several times, and went after him.

He beat me down there and took up a position at the opposite end of the clearing against a big rock. Time was too short to start a fight. Someone had to free the woman. I went down.

She was still all right. Calmer. Trying to conserve her air, I guessed. I had just started working on the clam when she clutched my arm.

I turned in time to see a giant white shape materialize out of the darkness beyond the gateway. Its deadly-looking pointed snout was surrounded by pilotfish and the great drum of a body which followed was bearded with remora. It just seemed to keep on coming, more and more of it. To the end of its slender tail, which flared out into a big lunate caudal fin, it must have measured thirty-five feet. It was a great white shark, the most voracious man-eater in the sea.

The woman's nails scored my arm. I saw Ritter tense, gripping the gun. I didn't move a muscle.

THE shark eased into the lagoon, searching the water with its eyes and hearing mechanism. The grottoes had suddenly emptied of fish. Not a movement. The monster drifted forward again, back-paddled with its pectoral fins, paused. It seemed puzzled.

I glanced cautiously at Mrs. Ritter. Only her eyes were visible through the face plate, white-ringed with horror. With a sick-feeling start I suddenly saw what was puzzling the shark—the steady stream of bubbles rising from her outlet valve. A shark's hearing is so acute it can hear another fish flap its fins in panic from several hundred yards away.

Slowly it began to move towards us.

Ritter's hunched, breath-withholding back showed tense concentration in every muscle. Cautiously he hitched the projector bazooka-wise on to his shoulder, sighted along the harpoon and swung carefully on to his target.

He can't be going to shoot it! I thought. A fish that size was practically indestructible. Yet if it located us what alternative was there? We couldn't leave the woman. Practically any other kind of shark I could have scared away by shouting and making a commotion. But not this. No. Ritter had figured the situation right. This was the showdown.

Drawn by the mysterious vibration, the shark propelled itself by little waves of its tail towards us. Its great belly brushed the tops of the weeds; it came down into them, down to within ten feet of the bottom.

There could be no doubt about it now. It was headed straight for us. Ritter swung with it all the way. You suicidal fool! I thought. Then more gently: steady, boy. Plenty of time. Sight on one eye. If he could blind it, then drop the gun, we might conceivably have a chance.

The monster glided in, straight for the rocks. My lungs were bursting already. Fifteen feet—in range now—but hold it; this thing would have a skin like an elephant. Thirteen feet—twelve—eight—six. Now shoot!

But Ritter didn't shoot. The shark came on over him and he kept on panning the gun upward. Too late, I thought, a nightmarish feeling of inevitability dilating inside of me.

It loomed above him now, filling the whole world, its whiteness refracting hazily in the salt, its saucepan eyes staring out too high to see him, its parted jaws with their file-edged teeth almost scraping the harpoon. Ritter was leaning right back, gun vertical. Petrified, I thought. Lost his nerve.

He fired! The spear jerked straight up into the underside of the head.

With a smash of its tail which shuddered the sea like a depth charge, the gigantic shark stood straight up on end. I was hurled away a dozen feet. The woman was torn clear of the shell and thrown twisting backwards.

The lagoon became a turmoil. In its leviathan convulsions the fish churned up dense clouds of sand, obscuring itself one moment, leaping out in silhouette the next, threshing and sunfishing and snapping.

I peered through the half-darkness looking for Ritter. But he was nowhere. For a brief second, then, I saw him. He was still clinging to the gun!

It was magnificent and tragic and needless. A gesture—to whom? Himself, I suppose. Prevail or die; that was his solution. In the strange and tortured country of his soul it had reduced itself to just that.

I grabbed the woman and dragged her upwards as fast as I could go.

The Sinhalese, terrified by the disturbance, helped me get her up into the boat. I gasped to him to row off, then turned to look for Ritter.

LESS than fifty feet away the shark's great tail lashed up out of the sea; smashed back again, sucking the water after it. Then up came its head, tilted like a surf-boat. It began to drive straight toward me. I've never been so scared in my life as I was at that moment. My insides seemed to shrivel up and die. I gasped in a breath, intending to dive, but before I could go under, the brute slewed broadside on to me. Its wash twisted me round and for a moment I could hear the clashing of its jaws.

When I turned back, it had vanished.

Silence. Fearfully, I peered beneath me, but the sun spun a milky fog in the disturbed water that was impossible to penetrate. I lifted my head and stared jerkily around.

Then I saw something floating in the water not thirty feet away. At first I thought it was the shark coming up. But it wasn't the shark. It was Ritter.

Scarcely daring to think, I started towards him. But before I had gone a yard the surface in front of me lifted like a weir and a huge white belly gleamed in the sun. It rolled over, gleamed again, went down with a drunken flap of dorsals and a whiplike caudal snap.

Its aftertow drew me forward and before I could stop myself I was right over it. I sucked in my belly and churned wildly with my fins. The next moment I was beyond it and nothing had snapped me in half. I almost bumped into Ritter. I caught hold of him. He seemed to be all in one piece, but whether he was alive or dead I couldn't tell.

EVEN as I caught hold of him the shark came vertically up out of the water practically beside us—straight up and out in one great hurtlingly white, crescent-writhing, sun-reaching plume of fury, the harpoon protruding like a toothpick from its brain. It crashed back almost on top of us, deluging us with spray.

Still leaping and plunging, it made for the open sea, ploughing a great weal in the water like a gunboat.

I watched it go, awestruck, for a second, my heart shuddering against the back of my throat. Then I got hold of myself, and Ritter, and began to drag him back to the boat.

It was just about all the three of us could do to get him aboard. When finally he was stretched out under the thwarts, I snatched one last look out to sea.

The shark was still visible—a white speck of foam, now, on the broad circumference of the ocean. It would die out there in the deep, I knew, taking hours, maybe days, fighting bitterly to the end.

"Hurry! He's alive!" Mrs. Ritter yelled at me.

I vaulted up into the boat and astride Ritter's back in near enough the same movement.

The first few pressures must have yielded close on a gallon. I worked on him for maybe twenty minutes, with Mrs. Ritter's breath on my neck and the Sinhalese mumbling to himself behind me. Maybe he was praying, I don't know, but if he was his prayers were answered. Ritter finally groaned and opened his eyes.

I kept on squeezing till his lungs were empty of sea water. Then, as he seemed to be struggling to sit up, I propped him against one of the thwarts. He leaned there with his head back, gulping in air.

"What happened?" The words seemed to pass his lips without touching them.

"You killed it," I said.

"I—killed it?" The eyes came open. They seemed to search the sky for a moment, then wandered slowly down to his wife's. She smiled at him and nodded.

"I killed it," he whispered incredulously. "I killed it!" His teeth gleamed for an instant, but it was no more than a ghostly echo of his old exultation. His voice became thoughtful. "I—killed—it."

He said it over and over again, slowly, as if to himself. And there was something, now, in the way he said it that told me he wasn't thinking only of the shark.

His wife seemed to understand. She didn't move, just sat there smiling at him. He smiled back. They were suddenly like a couple of children smiling at each other across the desks at school.

I turned to the boatman abruptly. "Well, what are you waiting for? Get moving! *Wapas jao!*"

"*Ji, Sah'b!*" He showed about ninety-seven huge white teeth and fitted the oars into their rowlocks.

He pulled so enthusiastically that the first stroke nearly spilled us clean over the stern. THE END

Consider your verdict

by

RUSSELL SCOTT, LL.B.

HORACE was spending the evening at the local fun fair, and had stopped to watch an attraction called the "Whizz Chair." This device consisted of metal chairs in which the passengers were whirled round at great speed; as the machine went faster, the chairs rose outwards and upwards in their circuit.

Simon was enjoying his ride in one of the chairs, and was showing off by jumping about, despite earlier warnings from Mr. Twist, the Whizz Chair proprietor, not to play the fool.

Suddenly, Simon's antics caused his chair to come loose from the chains which held it. The chair sailed through the air and hit the ground just short of Horace. He was knocked down and hurt, while Simon received a mass of bruises. Horace sued the proprietor Twist, for damages for nuisance. "Twist brought this dangerous machine to the fun fair, and he had an obligation to keep it under control," Horace told the judge in court. "If a chair becomes detached so easily, the entire apparatus should be scrapped."

"There are always irresponsible people like Simon at fun fairs, and Twist should have anticipated trouble. He let his machine get out of hand, therefore he is liable."

"A Whizz Chair is quite a common attraction at fun fairs, as Horace probably knows," retorted Twist.

"The device is perfectly safe if the people using it behave normally. It is unreasonable to expect me to be liable for the behaviour of dangerous fools like Simon. The accident was entirely his fault and no responsibility of mine."

What is your verdict? For the judge's decision, turn to page 50

Dog, you're a monster of ingratitude! There you are, living in the lap of luxury, and you try to pretend to me—to me!—that you lead a dog's life. Anyone would think it's all your own cleverness you're in such beautiful condition. As if I didn't give you Bob Martin's every single day . . . which reminds me, it's time you had one, isn't it? Oh, I see. That's why you're looking so reproachful. It's Bob Martin time, of course.

Give him

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condition!

WAR OF THE ROSES

Continued from page 28

the hall, charged into the garden with a wild cry.

The cows looked up, startled. Miss Lacey advanced and with great daring prodded the nearest cow with her umbrella. With a pained and reproachful look, the beast heaved itself round and ambled off on another course through a bed of Golden Dawn.

Like a madwoman, Miss Lacey flung herself about the garden, but her efforts merely threw the cows into confusion and the dog into a frenzy. The goats, driven from one spot to another, ate more greedily than ever. Miss Lacey gave up, sobbing with rage and despair as she gasped for breath.

As soon as she felt able to move again, she stumbled to the telephone and began to summon aid.

It was half an hour before the invaders were completely driven out by a force consisting of two farm labourers, the local constable and Mead. The labourers went off, driving their cows and goats between them; the policeman importantly took down all the information which Miss Lacey could give him. And when they were left alone, Mead shook his head.

"Bad do, this, miss."

"Very bad, Mead. Very bad." Miss Lacey was in control of herself again, but her face was pinched and white.

"Trouble was," Mead said, "with me having all this extra work to do on the roses, I never got round to seeing to the fence like I usually do. That's how they got in."

"I haven't had time to see just what the damage is——"

Mead shook his head again. "Terrible, miss. I had a look round while you were talking to the copper. Them goats had a wonderful eye for the best. All the ones we'd picked out special for the show seem to have gone. We *might* get a fairish vase or two——"

"But not to beat Mr. Gerrard?"

"I shouldn't say there's a hope of it, miss. Seems danged hard raising all these roses for a goats' breakfast."

"Pick out what you can, Mead. I'm going in." Miss Lacey's voice was tired and languid. She moved slowly towards the house. She had gone only a few yards when Mead called her back. "Just a minute, miss!"

Miss Lacey turned.

"There's a visitor, miss," Mead called. "Just coming in at the gate."

Miss Lacey, with emptiness in her heart, watched the arch-enemy Gerrard coming towards her up the path.

He did not look very much like an arch-enemy, as a matter of fact. His face was sympathetic and he carried his hat respectfully in his hand. "I just heard," he said. "I came to tell you how sorry I am."

"Thank you." Miss Lacey inclined her head. "It's very kind of you."

"I do hope your show blooms have escaped."

"They have all been eaten," Miss Lacey said starkly, "by the goats."

"I'm very sorry to hear it. I'd looked forward to a really good tussle with you again." Mr. Gerrard mopped his brow. It was a warm morning, and he must have hurried to have arrived so soon from Sunny View.

"If you'd care to come in——" Even in the midst of her distress, habit prompted Miss Lacey to remember the common courtesies.

"No, thanks. I mustn't stay. I've a lot to arrange. But I had intended to pop round to see you before the show in any case."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I wanted you to see—these."

Mr. Gerrard's eyes sparkled. There were so many roses about in the garden that Miss Lacey only noticed now for the first time that the spray of roses in his hand was one which he had brought with him.

She looked at them politely as he held them out. They were a rich cream, tipped with pink almost as though they had been at a bottle of nail-varnish. "They're very pretty," she said. "And so unusual. I don't think I've ever seen anything quite like them. What kind are they?"

"Ah!" Mr. Gerrard's face glowed with pride. "They *are* unusual. In fact, they're brand new. I've raised them myself!"

"You mean—it's an entirely new kind?"

"Absolutely. All my own work." His forehead glowed with pride, pink and gleaming. "I've been playing around with it for years. I started in my garden at Harrow long before I retired. And now it's come off! I've been in touch with the R.H.S. and I've had the National Rose Society people to see it. There's no doubt at all. It's entirely original!"

"Well, indeed!" Miss Lacey's glance bathed him in admiration. Her envy and her bitterness seeped away. There was no disgrace whatever in being beaten by a man who could rise to so great an achievement. It was indeed a privilege to know him—and he had come specially to tell her about it! "Well, I *am* pleased! Congratulations!"

Mr. Gerrard went pinker. He reminded Miss Lacey rather of a newly opened Caroline Testout. He shuffled again. "Thanks. Thanks awfully. I wanted to tell you privately before the show. Perhaps—you'd like to keep these?"

"Oh, thank you! I *would*." Miss Lacey took the gift in reverent hands. "The very first flowers of a new kind!" She sniffed at them gently, as if she feared that a really strong inhalation would damage the delicate blooms. "And, if I may ask—what are you calling your new rose?"

From Caroline Testout, Mr. Gerrard's complexion passed to a good, rich Etoile de Hollande. "Well, if I may," he blurted, "I'd like to call it—Adelaide Lacey."

Miss Lacey stared at him in astonishment. "But—that's *my* name!"

"I know. I want to call it after you. A woman who loves roses as much as you do deserves to give her name to one."

Miss Lacey almost swooned with the impact of the news. No one had ever paid her a compliment like this before! Never had she been so honoured! "Oh, Mr. Gerrard, I can't thank you. It's really too kind of you——"

Beside this reward, the mere winning of a first prize at a show was nothing at all. It was better, far better, even than a first at Chelsea! Anyone might win a prize, but how few had their names immortalized so exquisitely! She would be in the glorious company now of such people as Frau Karl Druschki, Betty Uprichard, Dorothy Perkins, Mrs. Sam McGredy, Caroline Testout herself, Ena Harkness. . . . Why, it was almost like being made a saint!

"I hope," she said—it was the first thing that came into her head and sounded so ineffectual—"I hope you win the first prize today."

He smiled confidently. "With my new Adelaide Laceys I'm almost bound to win. Then that will be a triumph for us both together, won't it?"

"Why, of course it will!" Tears of joy welled into Miss Lacey's eyes as this beautiful thought impressed itself on her. But even through the tears she could see another pink flush rising in Mr. Gerrard's cheeks, and even after the emotion of the morning she could still think shrewdly: I expect I will be seeing a little more of Mr. Gerrard in the future. THE END

Consider your verdict

In the case on page 49, the judge said that Twist had brought a dangerous machine to the fun fair. Because the operation of such a machine could not be regarded as a natural use of land, Twist was liable if it got out of control and caused damage. The fact that Simon's antics caused the chair to come off was no defence—Twist should have expected people like Simon at a fun fair. Horace won his case. (*This is the probable verdict, based on actual cases*).

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RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in "*Bullets*" *Bulletin* dated August 6 and in JOHN BULL dated August 13), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, July 30, for early news of No. 1,996 result.)

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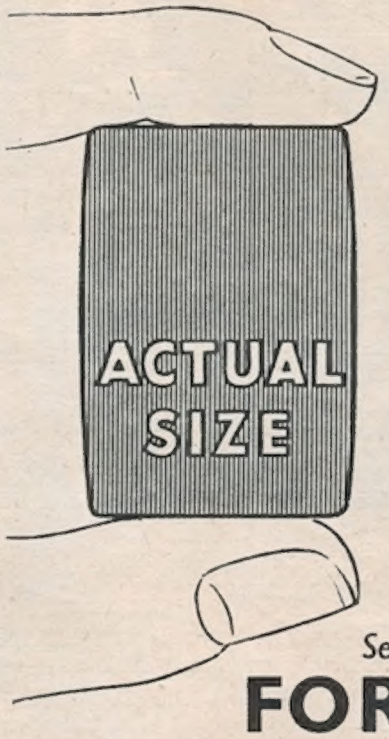

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